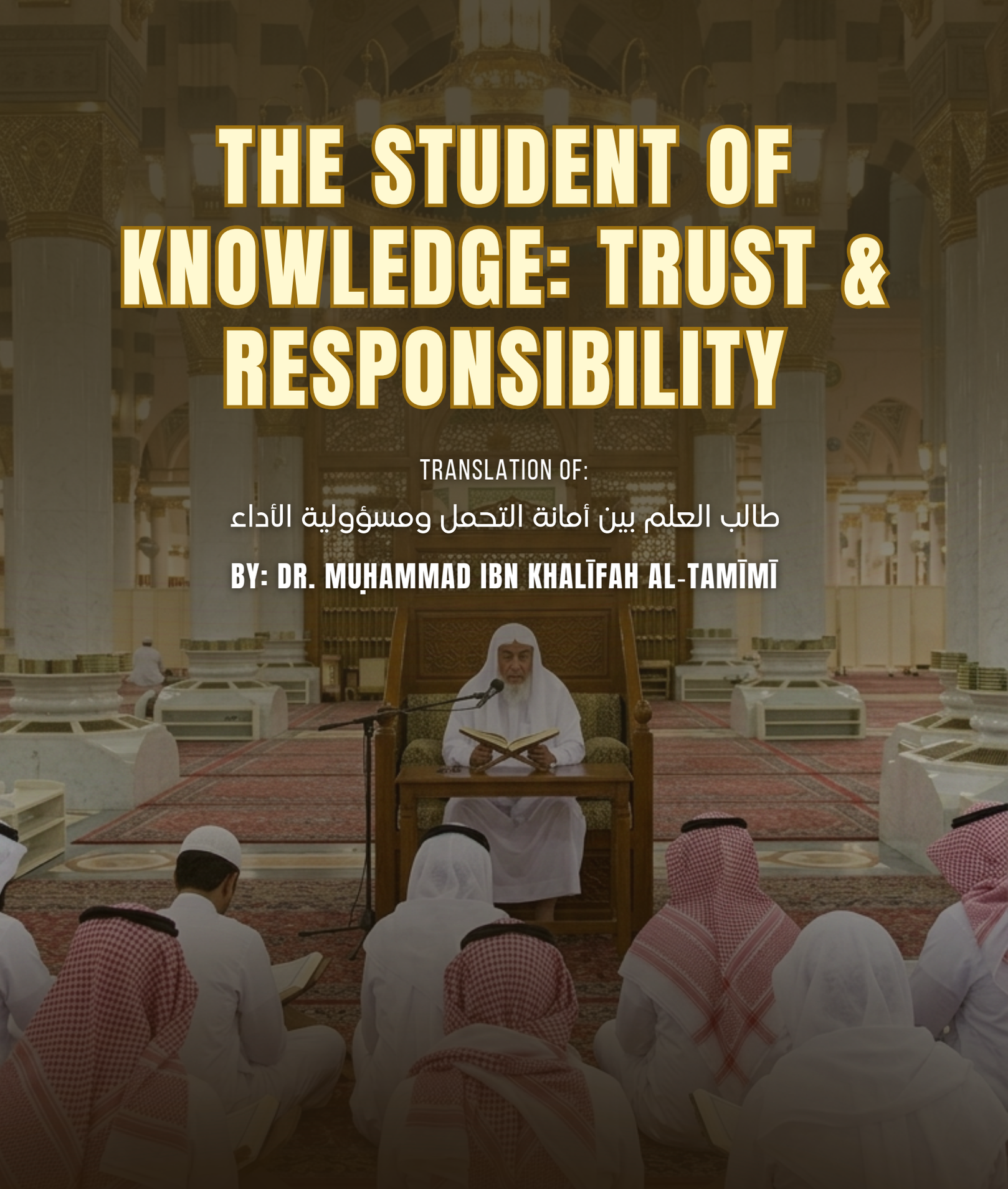
THE STUDENT OF KNOWLEDGE: TRUST & RESPONSIBILITY

TRANSLATION OF:

طالب العلم بين أمانة التحمل ومسؤولية الأداء

BY: DR. MUḤAMMAD IBN KHALĪFAH AL-TAMĪMĪ



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لِوَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنكُمْ جَزَآءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

Only for Allah's pleasure! We neither seek reward from you nor thanks.

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

الكتاب: طالب العلم بين أمانة التحمل ومسؤولية الأداء

The Student of Knowledge between the Trust of Bearing and the Responsibility of Conveying

By

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Foreword (By the Editor)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his family, and his companions.

About the Treatise

This treatise—being a translation of a concise yet weighty work by Shaykh Professor Dr. Muḥammad ibn Khalīfah ibn ʿAlī al-Tamīmī—addresses one of the most essential, yet often neglected, dimensions of seeking sacred knowledge: the dual responsibility of bearing it and conveying it. For knowledge in Islam is not merely the accumulation of information, nor a means of intellectual distinction; rather, it is a trust (amānah) placed upon the hearts of its seekers—demanding sound understanding before speech, and sincere action before instruction.

In a time when access to knowledge has become widespread, yet depth, discipline, and reverence have diminished, this work stands as a timely reminder. It revives a foundational Qurʾānic principle: that the seeker of knowledge must pursue it with sincerity of intent and humility of heart, and that the one who conveys it must do so with truthfulness and trust—lest knowledge become a proof against him rather than a proof in his favor.

An Overview of the Content

The discussion in this treatise revolves around the statement of Allah SWT:

"If only a group from every faction among them were to set out, so that they may gain deep understanding of the religion and warn their people when they return to them, so that they may be cautious." (al-Tawbah 9:122).

From this noble ayah, the author derives two foundational principles:

- *Amānat al-taḥammul* (the trust of acquiring and carrying knowledge),
- *Masʾūliyyat al-adāʾ* (the responsibility of conveying and fulfilling it).

He then develops these meanings through a clear and methodical structure as outlined below.

- The first section establishes the nobility and virtue of knowledge through evidences from the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and the statements of the early scholars.
- The second outlines the path to acquiring knowledge, emphasizing essential qualities such as intellectual sharpness, purity of heart, adherence to proper methodology, observance of etiquette, and the removal of obstacles that hinder true attainment.
- The third addresses the responsibility of conveying knowledge—both through righteous action and through teaching—highlighting that knowledge reaches completion only when it is lived and transmitted with sincerity.

Throughout the work, the author anchors his discussion in Quran and Sunnah, and the legacy of the righteous predecessors, presenting a balanced and integrated vision in which knowledge, action, and daʿwah are inseparable. It becomes evident that grounding oneself in knowledge is not merely a prerequisite to conveying it, but a lifelong companion to it.

About the Author

To enhance the benefit of this treatise, it is important for the reader to become

acquainted with its esteemed author, as the merit of a work is often recognized through the high standing of its author. Shaykh Professor Dr. Muḥammad ibn Khalīfah ibn ʿAlī al-Tamīmī is a distinguished Saudi academic from the blessed city of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, born on 12 Rajab 1379 AH (January 1960 CE). He completed his undergraduate studies at the Islamic University of Madinah in the Faculty of *Sharīʿah* in 1401 AH, and thereafter obtained his master's and doctoral degrees in *ʿAqīdah* from the same institution. His academic contributions include his study of Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān ibn Abī Shaybah and his book *al-ʿArsh*, as well as his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Rights of the Prophet ﷺ upon His Ummah in Light of the Qurʾān and Sunnah*, both of which have been published and widely benefited from.

He studied under a number of eminent scholars, including Shaykh Ḥammād al-Anṣārī, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-ʿAbbād, Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Jazāʾirī, and Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Ghunaymān, among others.

Figure 1: A photo of Shaykh Dr. Muḥammad ibn Khalīfah ibn ʿAlī al-Tamīmī

He progressed through the academic ranks from teaching assistant to full professor, and held numerous scholarly and administrative positions, including roles at the Islamic University of Madinah and Al-Madinah International University in Malaysia. His writings span various Islamic sciences, with a primary specialization in creed—particularly in the divine names and

attributes—alongside works on methodology, ethics of seeking knowledge, and the rights of the Prophet ﷺ. Through his teaching, authorship, supervision of research, and participation in academic and daʿwah efforts across many countries, he has made a lasting contribution to Islamic scholarship. May Allah preserve him and grant continued benefit through him.

We ask Allah SWT to grant acceptance to this work, to make it beneficial for its readers, and to record it as a continuous charity (ṣadaqah jāriyah) for its esteemed author, its translator, and all those who contributed to its publication.

Editor,

ICAN Sama-O-Basr

Perth, 28 Ramaḍān 1447 AH

Muqadimmah (By the Author)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful

Indeed, all praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, seek His forgiveness, and seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own souls and from the consequences of our misdeeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, none can mislead; and whomsoever He leaves astray, none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

"O you who believe, fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except in a state of Islam." (Āl ʿImrān 3:102)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

"O you who believe, fear Allah and speak words of uprightness. He will rectify your deeds for you and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly attained a great success." (al-Aḥzāb 33:70–71)

To proceed: indeed, the truest speech is the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ. The worst of matters are newly invented ones; every newly invented matter is a *bidʿah* (innovation in

religion), and every *bidʿah* is *ḍhalālah* (misguidance).

Allah, Exalted and Glorified, says:

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

"By Time. Indeed, mankind is in loss, except those who believe, perform righteous deeds, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to patience."
(al-ʿAṣr 103:1–3)

And He, the Exalted, also says:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And remind, for indeed reminder benefits the believers." (al-Dhāriyāt 51:55)

The Purpose of This Treatise

Among the greatest matters that students of knowledge should mutually exhort one another about and remind one another of is that responsibility which we have taken upon our shoulders and for which we have positioned ourselves—namely, the responsibility of *al-ʿilm al-sharʿī* (Islamic sacred knowledge), with whose carriage Allah has honored us, and regarding whose proper conveyance and fulfillment He will question us.

For this reason, I wished to remind myself and my brothers of the gravity of our responsibility and duty toward this knowledge to which we ascribe ourselves.

Two Important Responsibilities of the Student of Knowledge

I have done so through this study, which points to some of the meanings contained in the saying of Allah, the Exalted:

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

"If only a group from every faction among them were to set out, so that they may gain deep understanding of the religion and warn their people when they return to them, so that they may be cautious." (al-Tawbah 9:122)

[Two important responsibilities can be identified from the ayah mentioned above:]

- ***Amānat al-taḥammul*:** His statement, *li-yatafaqqahū fī al-dīn* ("so that they may gain deep understanding of the Deen"), is a directive toward the trust of bearing (*amānat al-taḥammul*), meaning that it is incumbent upon the student of knowledge to acquire a sound and deep understanding of the religion of Allah before placing himself forward to teach it and convey it to the general public.
- ***Masʾūliyyat al-adāʾ*[1]:** As for His statement, *li-yundhirū qawmahum idhā rajaʿū ilayhim laʿallahum yaḥdharūn* ("and warn their people when they return to them, so that they may be cautious,") it points to the responsibility of performance (*masʾūliyyat al-adāʾ*), which the student of knowledge bears after having equipped himself with beneficial and useful knowledge.

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[1] Al-adāʾ (الأداء) linguistically refers to delivering, fulfilling, or discharging something in its proper manner. It comes from the root (أ د ى), which carries the meaning of conveying or giving something as it is due.

In the context of knowledge, al-adāʾ refers to fulfilling the right of knowledge by conveying it correctly, acting upon it, and delivering it to others as it was received—without distortion, negligence, or betrayal.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said:

نَدَبَ تَعَالَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِلَى التَّفَقُّهِ فِي الدِّينِ، وَهُوَ تَعَلُّمُهُ، وَإِنْذَارِ قَوْمِهِمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ

"He – Exalted is He – encouraged the believers to gain understanding of the religion, which is learning it, and to warn their people when they return to them."[2]

There is no doubt that the student of knowledge who does not keep this ayah before his eyes is to be feared for destruction.

The Structure of This Book

In order to clarify the magnitude of this noble divine guidance and the meanings and benefits it contains, I have written this brief treatise and titled it:

طَالِبُ الْعِلْمِ بَيْنَ أَمَانَةِ التَّحَمُّلِ وَمَسْؤُولِيَّةِ الأَدَاءِ

"The Student of Knowledge between the Trust of Bearing and the Responsibility of Conveying."

Thus, I say—seeking success from Allah, and from Him alone I seek help and rectification—that I have summarized my discussion into three

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[2] Miftah Dar As-Sa'adah 1/56

The respected author has drawn upon a number of classical sources in the preparation of this treatise, with particular reliance on Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah by Imām Ibn al-Qayyim. This profound work highlights the central role of knowledge and righteous will as the foundation of true success and felicity.

In it, Ibn al-Qayyim R.A. explores the virtue of knowledge, the necessity of acting upon it, and its role in guiding a person to the recognition of Allah and His creation. He further emphasizes the need for adherence to the Sharīʿah, while addressing and refuting common misconceptions such as reliance on omens and astrology, clarifying these matters in light of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

principal sections and a conclusion:

Section One discusses "*The Nobility of Knowledge and the Virtue of Its People*," in the light of the following:

1. Evidence from the Qur'an
2. Evidence from the Sunnah
3. Statements of some of the scholars

Section Two, "*The Path to Bearing Islamic Knowledge*", contains four topics:

- The student of knowledge's need for intelligence (*dhakā'*) and purity and growth (*zakā'*)
- Levels of Attaining Knowledge
- The Etiquette of the Student of Knowledge
- Obstacles to Bearing Knowledge

Section Three, "*The Responsibility of Conveying Knowledge*," contains two topics:

1. Responsibility for conveying it through action
2. Responsibility for conveying it through teaching

Figure 2: Flow of themes in the book

Sources Drawn Upon in This Treatise

In compiling the material for this study, I have been keen to cite the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, and the reports transmitted from the *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ* (the righteous predecessors), while maintaining conciseness and avoiding undue length.

I therefore ask Allah that benefit be realized from what I have compiled, and that goodness and advantage be attained through it.

And Allah is the One who grants success.

Dr. Muḥammad ibn Khalīfah ibn ʿAlī al-Tamīmī

Section One: The Nobility of Knowledge and the Virtue of Its People

Summary of Section 1:

Section 1 establishes the lofty rank and immense virtue of knowledge in Islam through evidences drawn from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the statements of the early scholars. It demonstrates that knowledge is a divine favor granted by Allah, by which He distinguishes and elevates His servants in both this world and the Hereafter. The people of knowledge are described as those who possess true fear of Allah and as the inheritors of the Prophets, entrusted with preserving and conveying the religion. The texts further clarify that knowledge is a path to success, honor, and lasting benefit, the fruits of which continue even after death. At the same time, the section highlights that the true value of knowledge lies not merely in its acquisition, but in acting upon it and conveying it with sincerity. Thus, knowledge is presented as a means of nearness to Allah and a foundation for guiding both oneself and others.

Topic One: Evidence from the Noble Qur'an

The Divine Favor of Knowledge Upon the Seeker

The student of knowledge must remember the favor of Allah upon him—first, that He guided him to Islam, and second, that He made him among those who carry it and call to it. This is a blessing which Allah had already

bestowed upon His Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ before us, as He, the Exalted, says:

وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيماً

"And He taught you that which you did not know, and the favor of Allah upon you was immense." (al-Nisā' 4:113)

Yes—by Allah—the favor of Allah upon us is truly immense.

If you were to reflect upon His statement, the Exalted:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (al-Zumar 39:9)

and then reflect upon your own state before you sought knowledge and after Allah favored you with seeking knowledge—are the two states equal? The answer is: no.

And if you were to compare yourself with your peers of the same age who did not seek knowledge—are you equal? The answer is: no.

And if you were to compare yourself with the general masses of people, you would find a tremendous difference. This is one aspect.

The Elevation Granted Through Knowledge

As for the second, it is found in His statement, the Exalted:

يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

"Allah raises those who believe among you and those who have been given knowledge by degrees." (al-Mujādilah 58:11)

Indeed, the elevation that Allah has promised to people of faith and

knowledge encompasses both this worldly life and the Hereafter. As a result, the student of knowledge attains a recognized rank among people, along with standing, respect, and esteem. Although time does not allow for citing specific examples of this elevation, it remains something tangible and clearly observable.

Ibn al-Qayyim—may Allah have mercy upon him—said:

إِنَّ الْعِلْمَ يَرْفَعُ صَاحِبَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ مَا لَا يَرْفَعُهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَا الْمَالُ وَلَا غَيْرُهُمَا. فَالْعِلْمُ يَزِيدُ الشَّرِيفَ شَرَفًا وَيَرْفَعُ الْعَبْدَ الْمَمْلُوكَ حَتَّى يُجْلِسَهُ مَجَالِسَ الْمُلُوكِ. كَمَا ثَبَتَ فِي الصَّحِيحِ مِنْ حَدِيثِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي الطُّفَيْلِ أَنَّ نَافِعَ بْنَ الْحَارِثِ

"Knowledge elevates its possessor in this world and the Hereafter in a manner that neither kingship, nor wealth, nor anything else can. Knowledge increases the noble in nobility, and it raises the enslaved servant until it seats him in the gatherings of kings. This has been established in the Ṣaḥīḥ, in the narration of al Zuhrī from Abū al Ṭufayl, that Nāfiʿ ibn al Ḥārith[3] (may Allah be pleased with them).

[The narration, as reported in Saheeh Muslim 817, is as follows:]

Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) came to ʿUsfān. ʿUmar had appointed him [i.e. Nāfiʿ ibn al-Ḥārith] governor over the people of Makkah. ʿUmar said to him: 'Whom have you appointed over the people of the valley?' He replied: 'I appointed Ibn Abzā over them.' He said: 'And who

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[3] According to a number of scholars, Nāfiʿ ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥārith al-Khuzāʿī was a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ. It is reported that he accepted Islam on the day of the Conquest of Makkah and remained there without migrating. He was later appointed by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb as governor over Makkah, which reflects his standing and reliability. Nāfiʿ was counted among the virtuous Companions, and among the narrations attributed to him from the Prophet ﷺ is his statement: "From the happiness of a person is a spacious home, a righteous neighbor, and a comfortable mount."

is Ibn Abzā?' He replied: 'A man from our freedmen.' So ʿUmar said: I appointed over them a freedman." He said: "Indeed, he is a reciter of the Book of Allah and knowledgeable in the laws of inheritance." Thereupon ʿUmar said: "Indeed, your Prophet ﷺ has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْفَعُ بِهٰذَا الْكِتَابِ أَقْوَامًا وَيَضَعُ بِهِ آخَرِينَ

'Allah raises some people by this Book and lowers others by it.'"[4]

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[4] This wording can also be seen in other narrations. See Takhreej ul Musnad Li Shoaib 232; Saheeh Ibn Majah 180, Sunan Darimi 3408 and so on.

The explanation of this hadith is as follows:

The Commander of the Believers, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him), was keen to implement the rulings of Islam in all aspects of the state. For this reason, he would regularly question his governors about their affairs and how they conducted themselves in various situations. He would correct their mistakes and hold them accountable, and he would elevate those who possessed knowledge of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the legal rulings—acting in accordance with the principles of the noble Sharīʿah.

In this narration, ʿĀmir ibn Wāthilah (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that the Companion Nāfiʿ ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥārith (may Allah be pleased with him)—who accepted Islam at the time of the Conquest—was appointed by ʿUmar during his caliphate as governor over Makkah, where he remained until his death. Nāfiʿ once met ʿUmar at ʿUsfān, a village approximately 80 km north of Makkah on the road to Madinah. When they met, ʿUmar asked him: "Whom did you appoint in your place over the people of Makkah during your absence?" (the "valley" referring to Makkah and its surrounding areas). Nāfiʿ informed him that he had appointed ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abzā—his freedman—who had met the Prophet ﷺ, later settled in Kūfah, and was appointed by ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with him) over Khurāsān. The term *mawlā* refers here to one who had been freed from slavery.

ʿUmar responded with apparent disapproval: "Have you appointed a freedman over them?" — meaning, over the people of Makkah, who were known for their nobility and status. However, this was not out of contempt for Ibn Abzā, but rather concern for the purpose of leadership. Governance requires someone who commands respect in the eyes of the people so that order may be maintained; typically, this would be someone of recognized lineage and standing.

Imam Abū al-ʿĀliyah[5] said:

كُنْتُ آتِي ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى سَرِيرِهِ وَحَوْلَهُ قُرَيْشٌ، فَيَأْخُذُ بِيَدِي فَيُجْلِسُنِي مَعَهُ عَلَى السَّرِيرِ، فَتَغَامَزَ بِي قُرَيْشٌ، فَفَطِنَ لَهُمُ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، فَقَالَ: كَذَا هٰذَا الْعِلْمُ يَزِيدُ الشَّرِيفَ شَرَفًا وَيُجْلِسُ الْمَمْلُوكَ عَلَى الْأَسِرَّةِ

"I used to visit Ibn ʿAbbās (may Allah be pleased with him) while he was seated upon his couch, with Quraysh gathered around him. He would take me by the hand and seat me with him upon the couch. Quraysh would exchange glances about me, and Ibn ʿAbbās perceived this from them. He then said: 'Such is this knowledge: it increases the noble in nobility and seats the enslaved upon couches.'"[6]

The People of Knowledge as the People of True Awe

As for the third point, then the people of knowledge and those who seek it are the people of true awe and reverent fear, as Allah Himself has testified in His statement:

Nāfiʿ then clarified his reasoning, saying: "He is a reciter of the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic"—meaning he had memorized it and understood its limits—"and he is knowledgeable in the laws of inheritance." In other words, Allah had raised him through knowledge, and the people recognized this, thereby honoring and obeying him, which ensured stability in their affairs. Upon hearing this, ʿUmar approved and said: "Indeed, your Prophet ﷺ said: 'Allah raises some people by this Book and lowers others by it.'" That is, Allah elevates those who believe in the Qur'an, recite it, and act upon it sincerely—raising them in this world with a good life, and in the Hereafter with high درجات among the righteous. Conversely, He lowers those who reject it or neglect its teachings, leaving them in hardship in this world and abasement in the Hereafter.

[5] Imam Abū al-ʿĀliyah, whose name was Rufayʿ ibn Mihrān al-Riyāḥī, was a distinguished tābiʿī from Basrah and among the notable scholars of the early generations. He accepted Islam after the passing of the Prophet ﷺ and learned from a number of Companions, including ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Ibn ʿAbbās. He was well known for his knowledge of the Qur'an and its interpretation, and is regarded as a reliable and trustworthy narrator whose statements are frequently cited in the works of the scholars.

[6] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah, 1/164.

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاء

"Only those of His servants who possess knowledge truly fear Allah." (Fāṭir 35:28)

The Scholars as Witnesses to the Greatest Truth

As for the fourth, it is found in His statement, the Exalted:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَالْمَلائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِماً بِالْقِسْطِ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"Allah bears witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Him – and so do the angels and those endowed with knowledge – upholding justice. There is no deity worthy of worship except Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise."

(Āl ʿImrān 3:18)

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said: "He—Glorified is He—called upon those endowed with knowledge to bear witness to the greatest matter testified to, namely His *tawḥīd* (the absolute oneness and exclusive right of Allah to be worshipped). He said: *'Allah bears witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, and so do the angels and those endowed with knowledge, upholding justice.'* This indicates the virtue of knowledge and its people from several angles:

- First: that He singled them out for bearing witness, to the exclusion of the rest of mankind.
- Second: that He joined their testimony with His own.
- Third: that He joined it with the testimony of the angels.
- Fourth: that embedded within this is their commendation and validation, for Allah does not call as witnesses from His creation except those who are upright.

- Fifth: that He described them as those endowed with knowledge, indicating that it is their distinctive quality and that they are its true people and possessors, not merely borrowers of it.
- Sixth: that He—Glorified is He—testified Himself, and He is the greatest of witnesses, then followed this with the best of His creation: the angels and the scholars among His servants. This alone suffices them in virtue and honor."[7]

Knowledge as a Never-Ending Pursuit

As for the fifth, it is found in His statement, the Exalted:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْماً

"And say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge." (Ṭā Hā 20:114)

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said:

وَكَفَىٰ بِهٰذَا شَرَفًا لِلْعِلْمِ أَنْ أَمَرَ نَبِيَّهُ أَنْ يَسْأَلَهُ الْمَزِيدَ مِنْهُ

"And it suffices as an honor for knowledge that He commanded His Prophet ﷺ to ask Him for an increase in it."[8]

Topic Two: Evidence from the Sunnah

The Rank of the Scholars as Heirs of the Prophets

The people of knowledge are the heirs of the Prophets, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

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[7] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah, 1/48–49.

[8] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah, 1/50.

"The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets."[9]

Thus, Allah—Glorified is He—has made the scholars deputies and trustees over His religion and His revelation. He has chosen them to preserve it, uphold it, and defend it. And what an exalted rank and magnificent distinction this is.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said:

"His statement, '*Indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets,*' is among the greatest distinctions of the people of knowledge. For the Prophets are the best of Allah's creation, and their heirs are the best of creation after them. Since every inheritance passes on to the heirs—who assume the role of the one inherited from after his passing—and since there is no one after the Messengers who stands in their place in conveying what they were sent with except the scholars, they are the most deserving of their inheritance. In this there is also an indication that they are the closest of people to them, for inheritance is only for the closest. And just as this principle holds true with respect to the inheritance of dinars and dirhams, so too does it hold true with respect to the inheritance of prophethood. And Allah grants His mercy to whom He wills."[10]

Knowledge as a Path to Success in This World and the Hereafter

Furthermore, seeking knowledge is a source of goodness and happiness in

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[9] This report comes from a number of turuq. Some scholars have categorized as weak while other consider it acceptable due to the strength it receives through its other paths. It can be seen in Faiz ul Qadeer Li Al-Iraqi 4/384, Irshad us Sari 1/53, Majmu Al-Shurooh Al-Fiqhiyyah Li Ibn Baaz 16/24, Liqa Al-Baab al-Maftooh Li Ibn Uthaymeen 2/83, Daif ul Jami li Albani 1129, Al-Maqasid Al-Hasana li As-Sakhawi 340, and so on.

[10] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah, 1/66.

this world and the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

"Whomever Allah intends good for, He grants him understanding of the religion."[11]

And the Prophet ﷺ also said:

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ بِهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ رِضًا بِمَا يَصْنَعُ، وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ، حَتَّى الْحِيتَانُ فِي جَوْفِ الْمَاءِ، وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ، وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُوَرِّثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا، وَإِنَّمَا وَرَّثُوا الْعِلْمَ، فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحَظٍّ وَافِرٍ

"Whoever treads a path seeking knowledge upon it, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. Indeed, the angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge, out of pleasure with what he does. Indeed, the scholar is sought in forgiveness by those in the heavens and those on the earth – even the fish in the depths of the water. And indeed, the superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon on a night of its fullness over the rest of the stars. Indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams; rather, they left behind knowledge. Whoever takes hold of it has taken an abundant share."[12]

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[11] Saheeh Bukhārī 71; Saheeh Muslim 1037.

[12] Sunan Abū Dāwūd 3641, 3642; Sunan Ibn Mājah 223; Sunan al Dārimī 1/98, Musnad Aḥmad 1965.

The ḥadīth is sound due to its supporting narrations. See al Fatḥ ul Bari (1/160).

Shaykh Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿah[13] said:

"Know that there is no rank higher than the rank of one for whom the angels and others are occupied with seeking forgiveness and supplicating on his behalf, and for whom they spread their wings. People already compete to obtain the supplication of a righteous man—or one presumed to be righteous—so how then with the supplication of the angels? There has been disagreement regarding the meaning of their spreading their wings. It has been said that it means humility toward him; it has been said that it refers to descending near him and being present with him; and it has been said that it signifies honoring and venerating him."[14]

The Permissible Envy in Knowledge and Righteous Benefit

It is also reported from Ibn Masʿūd (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَسَلَّطَهُ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا

"There is no envy except in two cases: a man whom Allah has given wealth and enabled him to expend it rightly, and a man whom Allah has given wisdom, so he

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[13] Shaykh Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿah (d. 733 AH / 1333 CE) was a distinguished Shāfiʿī scholar, judge, and educator of the 8th century AH. His full name was Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Saʿd Allāh ibn Jamāʿah al-Kinānī al-Ḥamawī, and he served as a chief judge in major centers such as Damascus and Cairo. He was known for his scholarship in jurisprudence, ḥadīth, and the ethics of learning, and is particularly recognized for his work Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa al-Mutakallim, which addresses the etiquette of scholars and students of knowledge.

[14] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ wa l Mutakallim, p. 8

judges by it and teaches it."[15]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "The Prophet ﷺ informed that it is not appropriate for anyone to envy another—meaning envy of emulation (*ghibṭah*), wherein one wishes for a similar state without wishing for the removal of Allah's blessing from the other—except in one of these two qualities: benefitting people through one's knowledge or one's wealth. As for anything besides these two, one should not aspire to the like of it, due to the limited benefit it brings to people."[16]

Comment from the editor:

The meaning of the above statement is as follows, and Allah knows best:

- Envy (ḥasad) is of different types. One type is when a person wishes to attain the same state as another while also wishing that the favour and blessing bestowed upon the other person be removed from him. This type of envy is prohibited (ḥarām) in all circumstances.
- The second type is when a person wishes to attain a similar state as another without wishing that the mercy, favour, or blessings granted to that person be taken away. This is known as ghibṭah.
- Ghibṭah is allowed in the two cases mentioned in the hadith: a person who uses his wealth in the path of truth, and a person whom Allah has granted wisdom or knowledge and who judges and teaches with it.

[15] Saheeh Bukhari 7529; Saheeh Muslim 815.

[16] Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah 1/62

The Gardens of Paradise in This World

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

إِذَا مَرَرْتُمْ بِرِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ فَارْتَعُوا. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَمَا رِيَاضُ الْجَنَّةِ؟ قَالَ: حِلَقُ الذِّكْرِ

"When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, then partake therein."
They said: "O Messenger of Allah, what are the gardens of Paradise?"
He replied: "The circles of remembrance."[17]

The Everlasting Fruit of Knowledge

And it is reported from Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا مَاتَ ابْنُ آدَمَ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

"When the son of Adam dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who supplicates for him."[18]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim—may Allah have mercy upon him—said:

"This is among the greatest evidences of the nobility of knowledge, its virtue, and the greatness of its fruits. Its reward continues to reach a man after his death so long as people benefit from it, as though he were still alive and his knowledge had not ceased—along with the life of honorable mention and praise that he enjoys. Thus, the continuation of his reward after people have ceased their deeds is a second life."[19]

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[17] Saheeh At-Tirmidhi 3510 - Hasan

[18] Saheeh Muslim 1631

[19] Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah 1/175

Topic Three: Statements of The Ulema

1. This noble Companion, **Muʿādh ibn Jabal** (may Allah be pleased with him), said regarding the virtue of knowledge:

تَعَلَّمُوا الْعِلْمَ، فَإِنَّ تَعَلُّمَهُ لِلَّهِ خَشْيَةٌ، وَطَلَبُهُ عِبَادَةٌ، وَمُدَارَسَتُهُ تَسْبِيحٌ، وَالْبَحْثُ عَنْهُ جِهَادٌ، وَتَعْلِيمُهُ مَنْ لَا يُحْسِنُهُ صَدَقَةٌ، وَبَذْلُهُ لِأَهْلِهِ قُرْبَةٌ، بِهِ يُعْرَفُ اللَّهُ وَيُعْبَدُ، وَبِهِ يُوَحَّدُ، وَبِهِ يُعْرَفُ الْحَلَالُ مِنَ الْحَرَامِ، وَتُوصَلُ الْأَرْحَامُ، وَهُوَ الْأَنِيسُ فِي الْوَحْدَةِ، وَالصَّاحِبُ فِي الْخَلْوَةِ، وَالْقَرِيبُ عِنْدَ الْغُرْبَاءِ، وَمِنَارُ سَبِيلِ الْجَنَّةِ، يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَقْوَامًا فَيَجْعَلُهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرِ قَادَةً وَسَادَةً يُقْتَدَىٰ بِهِمْ، أَدِلَّةً فِي الْخَيْرِ تُقْتَصُّ آثَارُهُمْ، وَتُرْمَقُ أَفْعَالُهُمْ، وَتَرْغَبُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ فِي خُلَّتِهِمْ، وَبِأَجْنِحَتِهَا تَمْسَحُهُمْ، وَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ كُلُّ رَطْبٍ وَيَابِسٍ، حَتَّىٰ حِيتَانُ الْبَحْرِ وَهَوَامُّهُ وَسِبَاعُ الْبَرِّ وَأَنْعَامُهُ وَالسَّمَاءُ وَنُجُومُهَا، وَالْعِلْمُ حَيَاةُ الْقُلُوبِ مِنَ الْعَمَى، وَنُورُ الْأَبْصَارِ مِنَ الظُّلَمِ، وَقُوَّةٌ لِلْأَبْدَانِ مِنَ الضَّعْفِ، يَبْلُغُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ مَنَازِلَ الْأَبْرَارِ وَالدَّرَجَاتِ الْعُلَى، التَّفَكُّرُ فِيهِ يُعْدَلُ بِالصِّيَامِ، وَمُدَارَسَتُهُ بِالْقِيَامِ، وَهُوَ إِمَامٌ لِلْعَمَلِ وَالْعَمَلُ تَابِعُهُ، يُلْهَمُهُ السُّعَدَاءُ وَيُحْرَمُهُ الْأَشْقِيَاءُ

"Learn knowledge, for learning it for the sake of Allah is reverent fear; seeking it is worship; reviewing it is glorification; researching it is striving; teaching it to one who does not know it is charity; and imparting it to its people is an act of drawing closer to Allah. Through it, Allah is known and worshipped; through it, His oneness is affirmed; through it, the lawful is distinguished from the unlawful; through it, family ties are upheld. It is a companion in solitude, a friend in seclusion, a closeness among strangers, and a guiding light on the path to Paradise. By it, Allah raises certain people and makes them leaders and exemplars in goodness, followed and emulated – guides to good whose footsteps are traced, whose actions are observed, whom the angels long to accompany, and whom they touch with their wings. Every

moist and dry thing seeks forgiveness for them – even the fish of the sea and its creatures, the beasts of the land and its livestock, the heavens and their stars. Knowledge is the life of hearts after blindness, the light of sight after darkness, and strength for bodies after weakness. By it, a servant attains the ranks of the righteous and the loftiest degrees. Reflection upon it is equal to fasting, and studying it is equal to standing in prayer. It is the leader of action, and action follows it. It is inspired into the fortunate and withheld from the wretched."[20]

This report is well known from Muʿādh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him), who was the most knowledgeable of people regarding the lawful and the unlawful.[21]

2. It is also reported from ʿ**Alī** (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said:

النَّاسُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: عَالِمٌ رَبَّانِيٌّ، وَمُتَعَلِّمٌ عَلَى سَبِيلِ نَجَاةٍ، وَهَمَجٌ رَعَاعٌ أَتْبَاعُ كُلِّ نَاعِقٍ، يَمِيلُونَ مَعَ كُلِّ رِيحٍ، لَمْ

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[20] The report of Muʿādh R.A. was narrated by Ibn Abī Nuʿaym in al Ḥilyah (1/239). Ibn al Qayyim said: "It was narrated by al Khaṭīb and Abū Nuʿaym and others from Muʿādh ibn Jabal. Abū Nuʿaym also narrated it in al Muʿjam as a marfūʿ report traced back to the Prophet ﷺ, but it is not established as such. It suffices that it is authentically attributed to Muʿādh." End quote. See: Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/120).

[21] This statement is based on the following hadith:

أَرْأَفُ أمتي بأمتي أبو بكرٍ، وأشدُّهم في دينِ اللهِ عُمرُ، وأصدقُهم حياءً عثمانُ، وأقضاهم عليٌّ، وأفرضُهم زيدُ بنُ ثابتٍ، وأقرؤهم أُبَيٌّ، **وأعلمُهم بالحلالِ والحرامِ معاذُ بنُ جبلٍ**، ألا وإنَّ لكلِّ أمةٍ أمينًا، وأمينُ هذه الأمةِ أبو عُبيدةَ بنُ الجرَّاحِ

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: The most compassionate of my nation towards my nation is Abu Bakr. The strictest of them regarding the Deen of Allah is Umar. The most truthful of them in modesty is Uthman. The most knowledgeable of them in judicial rulings is Ali. The most knowledgeable of them regarding the laws of inheritance is Zayd ibn Thabit. The best reciter of the Qur'an among them is Ubayy ibn Ka'b. The most knowledgeable among them concerning the lawful and the unlawful is Mu'adh ibn Jabal. Indeed, every nation has a trustworthy guardian, and the trustworthy guardian of this nation is Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah." (Saheeh Al-Jami Li Albani 868)

يَسْتَضِيئُوا بِنُورِ الْعِلْمِ، وَلَمْ يَلْجَؤُوا إِلَى رُكْنٍ وَثِيقٍ. الْعِلْمُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَالِ، الْعِلْمُ يَحْرُسُكَ وَأَنْتَ تَحْرُسُ الْمَالَ. الْعِلْمُ يَزْكُو عَلَى الْإِنْفَاقِ، وَالْمَالُ تَنْقُصُهُ النَّفَقَةُ. الْعِلْمُ حَاكِمٌ، وَالْمَالُ مَحْكُومٌ عَلَيْهِ. وَمَحَبَّةُ الْعِلْمِ دِينٌ يُدَانُ بِهِ. الْعِلْمُ يُكْسِبُ الْعَالِمَ طَاعَةً فِي حَيَاتِهِ، وَجَمِيلَ الْأُحْدُوثَةِ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِهِ. وَصَنِيعَةُ الْمَالِ تَزُولُ بِزَوَالِهِ، مَاتَ خُزَّانُ الْمَالِ وَهُمْ أَحْيَاءٌ، وَالْعُلَمَاءُ بَاقُونَ مَا بَقِيَ الدَّهْرُ، أَعْيَانُهُمْ مَفْقُودَةٌ وَأَمْثَالُهُمْ فِي الْقُلُوبِ مَوْجُودَةٌ

"People are of three types: a) a learned scholar devoted to the Lord; b) a learner upon a path of salvation; and c) the rabble masses—followers of every crier, swaying with every wind. They have not been illuminated by the light of knowledge, nor have they sought refuge in a firm support. Knowledge is better than wealth: knowledge guards you, while you must guard wealth. Knowledge grows through giving, while wealth diminishes through spending. Knowledge rules, and wealth is ruled over. Love of knowledge is the path of life by which one is judged. Knowledge earns its possessor obedience during his lifetime and a beautiful remembrance after his death. The effects of wealth disappear when it disappears. The treasurers of wealth are dead while they are still alive, whereas the scholars remain as long as time remains. Their persons may be absent, but their examples live on in the hearts.[22]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said:

"His statement, *'Indeed, people are three: a learned scholar devoted to the Lord, a learner upon a path of salvation, and the rabble masses,'* is a precise classification of people, and it corresponds to reality. For a servant is either one who has attained perfection through knowledge and action—or not. The first is the

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[22] It was mentioned by Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani in *Hilyat al-Awliya* and others. Imam Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi said: 'This is a ḥasan (good) report, among the best of hadiths in meaning and the most noble in wording.' See: *Miftah Dar al-Sa'adah*, 1/123.

learned scholar devoted to the Lord. The second is one whose soul is in motion seeking that perfection and striving to attain it; this is the learner upon a path of salvation. The third is the rabble masses. Thus, the first has arrived, the second is seeking, and the third is deprived and turning away—neither a scholar nor a learner, but rather rabble masses. The *hamaj* (هَمَجٌ) among people are their foolish and ignorant ones. This term is the plural of *hamajah*, which refers to small flies like gnats that fall upon the faces and eyes of sheep and beasts.[23] Thus, the rabble among people were likened to them. And *ruʿāʿ* (رَعَاعٌ) refers to foolish people of no consequence. His statement, *'followers of every crier,'* means that whoever calls out to them, they follow him—whether he calls them to guidance or to misguidance—because they possess no knowledge of that to which they are being called: whether it is truth or falsehood."[24]

3. It is also reported from ʿ**Alī** (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said:

كَفَىٰ بِالْعِلْمِ شَرَفًا أَنْ يَدَّعِيَهُ مَنْ لَا يُحْسِنُهُ، وَيَفْرَحَ بِهِ إِذَا نُسِبَ إِلَيْهِ

وَكَفَىٰ بِالْجَهْلِ ذَمًّا أَنْ يَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ مَنْ هُوَ فِيهِ

"It suffices as an honor for knowledge that one who does not possess it claims it, and rejoices when it is attributed to him; and it suffices as a condemnation of ignorance that one who possesses it disavows it."[25]

4. ʿ**Abdullāh ibn Masʿūd** (may Allah be pleased with him) used to say, when

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[23] Lisan al-Arab, under the root letters: ha-meem-jeem — 2/392.

[24] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/125–126).

[25] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ, p. 10.

he saw young people seeking knowledge:

مَرْحَبًا بِكُمْ يَنَابِيعَ الْحِكْمَةِ، وَمَصَابِيحَ الظُّلْمَةِ، خَلْقَانَ الثِّيَابِ، جُدُدَ الْقُلُوبِ، حِلْسَ الْبُيُوتِ، رَيْحَانَ كُلِّ قَبِيلَةٍ

"Welcome O springs/fountains of wisdom, [you are] lanterns of the dark, wearing simple/tattered clothing, softhearted, clinging to your homes [in worship and seeking knowledge alone rather than wasting your time] and beautiful fragrance amidst all people."[26]

5. And Imam **Wahb ibn Munabbih**[27] (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

يَتَشَعَّبُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ الشَّرَفُ وَإِنْ كَانَ صَاحِبُهُ دَنِيًّا، وَالْعِزُّ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَهِينًا، وَالْقُرْبُ وَإِنْ كَانَ قَصِيًّا، وَالْغِنَىٰ

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[26] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 257 (1/232)

Another similar statement has also been reported from Ibn Masud R.A. however the version quoted above is stronger than the one presented below:

قال ابن مسعود كونوا ينابيع العلم مصابيح الهدى أحلاس البيوت سرج الليل جدد القلوب خلقان الثياب

تعرفون في أهل السماء وتخفون في أهل الأرض

Be springs of knowledge, lamps of guidance, adherents to your homes, lamps of the night, renewers of hearts, and wearers of worn clothing. You will be known among the inhabitants of the heavens but hidden among the inhabitants of the earth (Sunan Darimi 262; At Tawadu' Wal Khumul 11).

[27] Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 110 AH / 728 CE) was a renowned tābiʿī, scholar, and narrator from Yemen, known for his knowledge of early scriptures and historical reports. He was the son of a Persian convert to Islam and studied under a number of Companions, including Ibn ʿAbbās and Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them). Imam Wahb became widely recognized for his narrations related to tafsīr, stories of the Prophets, and reports from the People of the Book (Isrāʾīliyyāt), which appear in many early Islamic works. Despite this, he was regarded by scholars as trustworthy and knowledgeable, and his statements are frequently cited in classical literature.

وَإِنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا، وَالْمَهَابَةُ وَإِنْ كَانَ وَضِيعًا

"From knowledge branch out nobility, even if its possessor is lowly; honor, even if he was previously humiliated; closeness, even if he was distant; richness, even if he is poor; and dignity and awe, even if he is insignificant."[28]

6. Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah[29] (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

أَرْفَعُ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً مَنْ كَانَ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَبَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ، وَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالْعُلَمَاءُ

"The people of highest rank before Allah are those who stand between Allah and His servants – and they are the Prophets and the scholars."[30]

7. He also said:

لَمْ يُعْطَ أَحَدٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا شَيْئًا أَفْضَلَ مِنَ النُّبُوَّةِ، وَمَا بَعْدَ النُّبُوَّةِ شَيْءٌ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَالْفِقْهِ

"No one has been given anything in this world better than prophethood, and after prophethood there is nothing better than knowledge and understanding."

It was said to him: "From whom is this transmitted?"

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[28] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ, p. 10

[29] Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah (d. 198 AH / 814 CE) was a distinguished imām of ḥadīth from the third generation, originally from Kūfah but raised and settled in Makkah, where he spent most of his life. He studied under leading scholars such as al-Zuhrī and ʿAmr ibn Dīnār—whom he closely accompanied—and was known for his exceptional memory and early dedication to knowledge, having memorized the Qur'an at a young age. He met numerous successors of the Companions and later taught many leading scholars, including al-Shāfiʿī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Though he encountered figures such as Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik, he was primarily recognized as a scholar of ḥadīth. Renowned for his precision, insight, and profound statements on knowledge and sincerity, he remains one of the foremost authorities of the early generations.

[30] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ, p. 11

He replied: "From all the jurists."[31]

8. It is reported from Imam **Sufyān al-Thawrī**[32] and Imam **al-Shāfiʿī** (may Allah be pleased with them) that they both said:

لَيْسَ بَعْدَ الْفَرَائِضِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ

"There is nothing better after the obligatory duties than seeking knowledge."[33]

9. Shaykh **Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿah** said:

إِنَّ الِاشْتِغَالَ بِالْعِلْمِ لِلَّهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ نَوَافِلِ الْعِبَادَاتِ الْبَدَنِيَّةِ مِنْ صَلَاةٍ وَصِيَامٍ وَتَسْبِيحٍ وَدُعَاءٍ وَنَحْوِ ذٰلِكَ، لِأَنَّ نَفْعَ الْعِلْمِ يَعُمُّ صَاحِبَهُ وَالنَّاسَ، وَالنَّوَافِلَ الْبَدَنِيَّةَ مَقْصُورَةٌ عَلَى صَاحِبِهَا، وَلِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ مُصَحِّحٌ لِغَيْرِهِ مِنَ الْعِبَادَاتِ، فَهِيَ تَفْتَقِرُ إِلَيْهِ وَتَتَوَقَّفُ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَتَوَقَّفُ هُوَ عَلَيْهَا، وَلِأَنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ عَلَيْهِمُ الصَّلَاةُ وَالتَّسْلِيمُ وَلَيْسَ ذٰلِكَ لِلْمُتَعَبِّدِينَ، وَلِأَنَّ طَاعَةَ الْعَالِمِ وَاجِبَةٌ عَلَى غَيْرِهِ فِيهِ، وَلِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ يَبْقَى أَثَرُهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِ صَاحِبِهِ، وَغَيْرُهُ مِنَ النَّوَافِلِ تَنْقَطِعُ بِمَوْتِ صَاحِبِهَا، وَلِأَنَّ فِي بَقَاءِ الْعِلْمِ إِحْيَاءَ الشَّرِيعَةِ

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161 AH / 778 CE), Abū ʿAbd Allāh Sufyān ibn Saʿīd al-Thawrī, was a distinguished imām of ḥadīth, fiqh, and asceticism from Kūfah, and one of the foremost scholars of the early generations. He studied under numerous teachers—reported to be in the hundreds—and became widely recognized for his mastery of ḥadīth, to the extent that he was described as "the Commander of the Believers in ḥadīth." He was also the founder of an early school of jurisprudence, though it did not continue as an established madhhab. Sufyān was known for his deep piety, detachment from worldly authority, and his firm avoidance of rulers, consistently declining positions offered to him. He taught many students and left a lasting influence on the major schools of Islam, and was widely praised by the scholars for his knowledge, precision, and profound concern for sincerity and accountability before Allah.

[33] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih (1/123–124)

وَحِفْظَ مَعَالِمِ الْمِلَّةِ

"Occupying oneself with knowledge for the sake of Allah is superior to voluntary bodily acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, glorification, supplication, and the like. This is because the benefit of knowledge extends to its possessor and to others, whereas voluntary bodily acts are restricted to the individual himself.

Moreover, knowledge rectifies other acts of worship, for they depend upon it and are contingent upon it, while it does not depend upon them. Further, scholars are the heirs of the Prophets – peace and blessings be upon them – whereas this is not the case for mere worshippers. The obedience of the scholar is binding upon others in matters of knowledge, and the effects of knowledge remain after the death of its possessor, while other voluntary acts cease with the death of the one who performs them.

Additionally, in the preservation of knowledge lies the revival of the Sharīʿah and the safeguarding of the defining features of the religion."[34]

10. Imam **Ibn al-Qayyim** said:

السَّعَادَةُ الْحَقِيقِيَّةُ هِيَ سَعَادَةُ الْعِلْمِ النَّافِعِ ثَمَرَتُهُ، فَإِنَّهَا هِيَ الْبَاقِيَةُ عَلَى تَقَلُّبِ الْأَحْوَالِ، وَالْمُصَاحِبَةُ لِلْعَبْدِ فِي جَمِيعِ أَسْفَارِهِ وَفِي دُورِهِ الثَّلَاثَةِ أَعْنِي: دَارَ الدُّنْيَا وَدَارَ الْبَرْزَخِ وَدَارَ الْقَرَارِ وَبِهَا يَرْتَقِي مَعَارِجَ الْفَضْلِ وَدَرَجَاتِ الْكَمَالِ. وَإِنَّمَا رَغِبَ أَكْثَرُ الْخَلْقِ عَنْ اكْتِسَابِ هٰذِهِ السَّعَادَةِ وَتَحْصِيلِهَا لِوُعُورَةِ طَرِيقِهَا وَمَرَارَةِ مَبَادِيهَا وَتَعَبِ تَحْصِيلِهَا، وَأَنَّهَا لَا تُنَالُ إِلَّا عَنْ جِدٍّ مِنَ التَّعَبِ، فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَحْصُلُ إِلَّا بِالْجِدِّ الْمَحْضِ

"True happiness is the happiness that results from beneficial knowledge and its fruits. It is the happiness that remains despite changing circumstances, and that accompanies the servant throughout all his journeys and across his three abodes –

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[34] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ, p. 13.

namely, the abode of this world, the abode of the intermediate life (barzakh), and the abode of eternal settlement. Through it, one ascends the paths of virtue and the levels (درجات) *of perfection. Most people, however, turn away from acquiring this happiness and attaining it due to the ruggedness of its path, the bitterness of its beginnings, and the toil involved in acquiring it – since it is only attained through pure and earnest striving*."

Comment from the editor:

The following is a compilation of some more sayings of the Aslaf about the special status of knowledge and the scholars.

Imam ʿAwn ibn ʿAbdullah said:

إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَكُونَ عَالِمًا فَكُنْ عَالِمًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَكُنْ مُتَعَلِّمًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مُتَعَلِّمًا فَأَحِبَّهُمْ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تُحِبَّهُمْ فَلَا تُبْغِضْهُمْ.

'*If you are able to be a scholar, then be a scholar; if you cannot, then be a learner; if you are not a learner, then love them; and if you do not love them, then do not hate them.*' (*Kitab ul Ilm* by Abū Khaythamah Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb, no. 726).

Imam Al-Hasan Al-Basri[35] said:

[35] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 AH / 728 CE) was a renowned tābiʿī, scholar, and ascetic from Baṣrah, and one of the most influential figures of the early Islamic generations. Born in Madinah during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him), he grew up among the Companions and learned from many of them, including Anas ibn Mālik and others (may Allah be pleased with them all). He became widely known for his deep knowledge, eloquence, and powerful admonitions, particularly regarding sincerity, fear of Allah, and detachment from worldly life. Al-Ḥasan was highly respected by scholars for his understanding of the Qur'an and his wisdom, and his statements are frequently cited in works on spirituality, ethics, and the purification of the heart.

مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ يُرِيدُ بِهِ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ مِمَّا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ.

"Whoever seeks knowledge desiring by it what is with Allah, it is better for him than everything upon which the sun rises." (*Sharḥ al-Minnah*, 1/275)

He also said:

الدُّنْيَا كُلُّهَا ظُلْمَةٌ إِلَّا مَجَالِسَ الْعُلَمَاءِ.

"The whole world is darkness except the gatherings of the scholars." (Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih, 1/236.)

Imam Abu Bakr Ibn Duraid said:

الْعَالِمُ الْعَاقِلُ ابْنُ نَفْسِهِ

أَغْنَاهُ جِنْسُ عِلْمِهِ عَنْ جِنْسِهِ

كُنِ ابْنَ مَنْ شِئْتَ وَكُنْ مُؤَدَّبًا

فَإِنَّمَا الْمَرْءُ بِفَضْلِ كَيْسِهِ

وَلَيْسَ مَنْ تُكْرِمُهُ لِغَيْرِهِ

مِثْلَ الَّذِي تُكْرِمُهُ لِنَفْسِهِ

"The knowledgeable and intelligent man is the son of his own self;
The quality of his knowledge enriches him beyond his lineage.
Be the son of whom you wish, but be disciplined,
For a person is only by the virtue of his intellect.
The one whom you honor because of another
Is not like the one whom you honor for his own sake."

(*Adab al-Dīn wa al-Dunyā* by al-Māwardī, p. 54)

Abu Bakr al-Ājurrī said,

الْعُلَمَاءُ فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ لَهُمْ فَضْلٌ عَظِيمٌ: فِي خُرُوجِهِمْ لِطَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ لَهُمْ فِيهِ فَضْلٌ، وَفِي مُجَالَسَتِهِمْ لَهُمْ فِيهِ فَضْلٌ، وَفِي مُذَاكَرَةِ بَعْضِهِمْ لِبَعْضٍ لَهُمْ فِيهِ فَضْلٌ، وَفِي مَنْ تَعَلَّمُوا مِنْهُ الْعِلْمَ لَهُمْ فِيهِ فَضْلٌ، وَفِي مَنْ عَلَّمُوهُ الْعِلْمَ لَهُمْ فِيهِ فَضْلٌ، فَقَدْ جَمَعَ اللَّهُ لِلْعُلَمَاءِ الْخَيْرَ مِنْ جِهَاتٍ كَثِيرَةٍ، نَفَعَنَا اللَّهُ وَإِيَّاهُمْ بِالْعِلْمِ.

"Scholars in every situation possess tremendous virtue: in their going out to seek knowledge there is virtue for them; in their sitting together there is virtue for them; in their reviewing knowledge with one another there is virtue for them; in those from whom they learned knowledge there is virtue; and in those whom they taught knowledge there is virtue. Allah has gathered goodness for the scholars from many directions. May Allah benefit us and them with knowledge" (*Akhlaq al-ʿUlamāʾ* by al-Ājurrī, p. 41).

Imam Fudhail Ibn Iyad said:

عَالِمٌ عَامِلٌ مُعَلِّمٌ يُدْعَى كَبِيرًا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ.

"A scholar who acts upon his knowledge and teaches it is called great in the kingdom of the heavens." (Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2685; *Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ* p. 70).

Imam Ash-Shafi'i said,

مَنْ أَرَادَ الدُّنْيَا فَعَلَيْهِ بِالْعِلْمِ، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالْعِلْمِ.

"*Whoever desires the world must pursue knowledge, and whoever desires the Hereafter must pursue knowledge.*" (Sharh Matn Abi Shuja by Muhammad Hassan Abdul Ghaffar, 1/14)

And he said:

مَنْ لَا يُحِبُّ الْعِلْمَ فَلَا خَيْرَ فِيهِ، فَلَا يَكُنْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ مَعْرِفَةٌ وَلَا صَدَاقَةٌ.

"*Whoever does not love knowledge, there is no good in him; so let there be neither acquaintance nor friendship between you and him*." (Sharh Al-Bukhari Li As-Safeeri 2/89)

And he also said:

مَا أَحَدٌ أَوْرَعُ لِخَالِقِهِ مِنَ الْفُقَهَاءِ.

"*No one is more cautious toward his Creator than the jurists*." (Ibid)

It is further reported from him that he said:

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ عَظُمَتْ قِيمَتُهُ، وَمَنْ نَظَرَ فِي الْفِقْهِ نَبُلَ قَدْرُهُ، وَمَنْ نَظَرَ فِي اللُّغَةِ رَقَّ طَبْعُهُ، وَمَنْ نَظَرَ فِي الْحِسَابِ جَزُلَ رَأْيُهُ، وَمَنْ كَتَبَ الْحَدِيثَ قَوِيَتْ حُجَّتُهُ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَصُنْ نَفْسَهُ لَمْ يَنْفَعْهُ عِلْمُهُ.

"*Whoever learns the Qur'an, his value becomes great; whoever studies jurisprudence, his rank becomes noble; whoever studies the language, his nature becomes refined; whoever studies calculation, his judgment becomes sound; whoever writes hadith, his proof becomes strong; and whoever does not safeguard himself, his knowledge will not benefit him.*" (*Al-Majmūʿ* by al-Nawawī, 1/42).

It is reported from some scholars that they said:

الْجَاهِلُ صَغِيرٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ شَيْخًا، وَالْعَالِمُ كَبِيرٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ حَدَثًا.

"*The ignorant person is small even if he is old, and the scholar is great even*

if he is young." (Al-Jami Li Akhlaq Ar-Rawi 1/326).

Imam Shafi'i also said:

تَعَلَّمْ فَلَيْسَ الْمَرْءُ يُولَدُ عَالِمًا

وَلَيْسَ أَخُو عِلْمٍ كَمَنْ هُوَ جَاهِلٌ

وَإِنَّ كَبِيرَ الْقَوْمِ لَا عِلْمَ عِنْدَهُ

صَغِيرٌ إِذَا الْتَفَتَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَحَافِلُ

وَإِنَّ صَغِيرَ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ كَانَ عَالِمًا

كَبِيرٌ إِذَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِ الْمَحَافِلُ

"Seek knowledge, for a man is not born a scholar,
And the one who possesses knowledge is not like the ignorant.
Indeed, the great of a people, if he has no knowledge,
Is small when the gatherings turn to him.
And the young among the people, if he is a scholar,
Is great when the gatherings return to him."

(*Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih* by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, 1/159)

Abdullah, son of Imam Ahmed, said:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي: أَيُّ رَجُلٍ الشَّافِعِيُّ؟ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُكَ تُكْثِرُ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ لَهُ؟ قَالَ: يَا بُنَيَّ، كَانَ كَالشَّمْسِ

لِلدُّنْيَا، وَكَالْعَافِيَةِ لِلْبَدَنِ، فَهَلْ لِهَذَيْنِ مِنْ خَلَفٍ؟ أَوْ مِنْهُمَا مِنْ عِوَضٍ؟

"I said to my father: 'What kind of man was al-Shāfiʿī? For I hear you supplicate for him often.' He said: 'My son, he was like the sun for the world

and like health for the body. Is there any replacement for these? Or any substitute for them?'" (*Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā'*, 1/45).

Imam Maymoon Ibn Mehran said:

الْعُلَمَاءُ هُمْ ضَالَّتِي فِي كُلِّ بَلَدٍ، وَهُمْ بُغْيَتِي إِذَا لَمْ أَجِدْهُمْ،

وَوَجَدْتُ صَلَاحَ قَلْبِي فِي مُجَالَسَةِ الْعُلَمَاءِ.

"*The scholars are my lost treasure in every land. They are my desire when I do not find them, and I found the rectification of my heart in sitting with the scholars.*" (*Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih*, 1/237).

He also said:

إِنَّ مَثَلَ الْعَالِمِ فِي الْبَلَدِ كَمَثَلِ عَيْنٍ عَذْبَةٍ فِي الْبَلَدِ.

"*The example of the scholar in a town is like a fresh spring of water in that town.*" (*Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih*, 1/237).

It is also said:

مَثَلُ الْعُلَمَاءِ مَثَلُ الْمَاءِ، حَيْثُمَا سَقَطُوا نَفَعُوا.

"*The example of scholars is like water – wherever they fall, they bring benefit.*"(*Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih*, 1/257).

Imam Ahmed Ibn Ghazzal wrote:

الْأَرْضُ تَحْيَا إِذَا مَا عَاشَ عَالِمُهَا

مَتَى يَمُتْ عَالِمٌ مِنْهَا يَمُتْ طَرَفٌ

كَالْأَرْضِ تَحْيَا إِذَا مَا الْغَيْثُ حَلَّ بِهَا

وَإِنْ أَبَى عَاشَ فِي أَكْنَافِهَا التَّلَفُ

"The earth lives when its scholar lives;
When a scholar dies, a part of it dies.
Like the earth which lives when rain falls upon it,
But when it withholds, destruction spreads across its lands."

(*Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr, 2/846)

Imam Sakhawi said:

إِنَّمَا النَّاسُ بِشُيُوخِهِمْ، فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الشُّيُوخُ فَمَعَ مَنْ الْعَيْشُ؟!

"People are only by their shuyukh; when the shuyukh are gone, with whom will life continue?" (*Fatḥ al-Mughīth*, 2/320)

Imam Abu Ja'far At-Tahawi said:

كُنْتُ عِنْدَ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ أَبِي عِمْرَانَ، فَمَرَّ بِنَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي الدُّنْيَا، فَنَظَرْتُ إِلَيْهِ، وَشُغِلْتُ بِهِ عَمَّا كُنْتُ فِي الْمُذَاكَرَةِ، فَقَالَ لِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عِمْرَانَ: كَأَنِّي بِكَ قَدْ فَكَّرْتَ فِيمَا أُعْطِيَ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا؟ قُلْتُ لَهُ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى خَلَّةٍ؟ هَلْ لَكَ أَنْ يُحَوِّلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ مَا عِنْدَهُ مِنَ الْمَالِ، وَيُحَوِّلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا عِنْدَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ، فَتَعِيشَ أَنْتَ غَنِيًّا جَاهِلًا، وَيَعِيشَ هُوَ عَالِمًا فَقِيرًا؟ فَقُلْتُ: مَا أَخْتَارُ أَنْ يُحَوِّلَ اللَّهُ مَا عِنْدِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَى مَا عِنْدَهُ، فَالْعِلْمُ غِنًى بِلَا مَالٍ، وَعِزٌّ بِلَا عَشِيرَةٍ، وَسُلْطَانٌ بِلَا رِجَالٍ.

"I was with Ahmad ibn Abi ʿImrān when a man from the people of worldly wealth passed by us. I looked at him and became distracted by him from the discussion I was engaged in. Ahmad ibn ʿImrān said to me: 'It seems to me that you were thinking about what this man has been given of worldly

things.' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Shall I show you something? Would you like Allah to transfer to you the wealth he has, and transfer to him the knowledge you have, so that you would live as a rich but ignorant man, and he would live as a knowledgeable but poor man?' I said: 'I would never choose that Allah transfer the knowledge I have to him. For knowledge is wealth without money, honor without a clan, and authority without men.'" (*Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah*, 1/507).

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim said:

الْعُلَمَاءُ بِاللَّهِ وَأَمْرِهِ هُمْ حَيَاةُ الْوُجُودِ وَرُوحُهُ، وَلَا يُسْتَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ، فَحَاجَةُ الْقَلْبِ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ لَيْسَتْ كَالْحَاجَةِ إِلَى التَّنَفُّسِ فِي الْهَوَاءِ، بَلْ أَعْظَمُ، وَبِالْجُمْلَةِ فَالْعِلْمُ لِلْقَلْبِ مِثْلُ الْمَاءِ لِلسَّمَكِ، إِذَا فَقَدَهُ مَاتَ، فَنِسْبَةُ الْعِلْمِ إِلَى الْقَلْبِ كَنِسْبَةِ ضَوْءِ الْعَيْنِ إِلَيْهَا.

"*The scholars of Allah and His command are the life and spirit of existence. The heart cannot do without them for even a moment. The heart's need for knowledge is not like its need for breathing air – rather it is greater. In summary, knowledge for the heart is like water for the fish: if it loses it, it dies.*" (*Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah*.)

Comment from the editor:

The esteemed Shaykh has presented a selection of verses, aḥādīth, and statements of the Salaf relating to this topic in order to establish its foundations and provide context. The student of knowledge may further benefit by consulting additional works in this field, through which his understanding is deepened, his resolve strengthened, and his comprehension made more complete. Among the useful resources

in this regard are:

- Jāmiʿ al-ʿIlm *(Compendium of Knowledge)* – al-Shāfiʿī
- al-ʿIlm *(Knowledge)* – Abū Khaythamah Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb
- al-ʿIlm *(Knowledge)* – al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī
- Akhlāq al-ʿUlamā' *(The Character of the Scholars)* – al-Ājurrī
- Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih *(Comprehensive Clarification of Knowledge and Its Virtue)* – Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr
- Adab al-Majālasah wa Ḥamd al-Lisān *(The Etiquette of Gatherings and Praising the Tongue)* – Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr
- al-Jāmiʿ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Ādāb al-Sāmiʿ *(The Compendium of the Narrator's Character and the Listener's Etiquette)* – al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī[36]
- al-Faqīh wa al-Mutafaqqih *(The Jurist and the Student of Jurisprudence)* – al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī
- Iqtidhā' al-ʿIlm al-ʿAmal *(Knowledge Necessitates Action)* – al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī
- Taqyīd al-ʿIlm *(Restricting Knowledge [by Writing])* – al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī

[36] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463 AH / 1071 CE), whose full name was Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Thābit al-Baghdādī, was a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth, history, and biography, and one of the leading authorities of his time. He was born in Baghdad and traveled extensively in search of knowledge, studying under numerous scholars across the Islamic world. He is especially known for his monumental work Tārīkh Baghdād, a comprehensive biographical dictionary of the scholars of Baghdad, as well as for his contributions to the sciences of ḥadīth, including works on its methodology and etiquette. Al-Khaṭīb was renowned for his precision, vast knowledge, and dedication to preserving the scholarly tradition, and his writings remain essential references in Islamic scholarship.

- Sharaf Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth *(The Honor of the People of Ḥadīth)* – al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī
- al-Riḥlah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥadīth *(Travel in the Pursuit of Ḥadīth)* – al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī
- Dhamm Man Lā Yaʿmal bi-ʿIlmih *(Censure of One Who Does Not Act Upon His Knowledge)* – Ibn ʿAsākir
- Taʿlīm al-Mutaʿallim Ṭarīq al-Taʿallum *(Teaching the Student the Path of Learning)* – al-Zarnūjī
- al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalat al-Qurʾān *(Clarification of the Etiquette of the Bearers of the Qurʾān)* – al-Nawawī
- Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-ʿĀlim wa al-Mutaʿallim *(Reminder for the Listener and Speaker on the Etiquette of the Scholar and Student)* – Ibn Jamāʿah
- Zaghl al-ʿIlm *(The Corruption of Knowledge)* – al-Dhahabī
- Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah wa Manshūr Wilāyat Ahl al-ʿIlm wa al-Irādah *(The Key to the Abode of Happiness and the Charter of the People of Knowledge and Will)* – Ibn al-Qayyim
- Faḍl ʿIlm al-Salaf ʿalā ʿIlm al-Khalaf *(The Superiority of the Knowledge of the Early Generations over the Later Ones)* – Ibn Rajab
- Adab al-Imlāʾ wa al-Istimlāʾ *(The Etiquette of Dictation and Reception)* – al-Samʿānī
- Ḥilyat Ṭālib al-ʿIlm *(The Adornment of the Student of Knowledge)* – Bakr Abū Zayd
- al-Nubadh fī Ādāb Ṭalab al-ʿIlm *(Selections on the Etiquette of Seeking Knowledge)* – Ḥamad al-ʿUthmān

- al-ʿIlm wa al-ʿUlamāʾ *(Knowledge and the Scholars)* – Abū Bakr al-Jazāʾirī

Some of The Actionable Points from Section 2:

- Renew your intention in seeking knowledge, ensuring that it is done sincerely for the sake of Allah and not for recognition or status.
- Strive to act upon what you learn, even if it is little, for knowledge without action is of no benefit.
- Remain humble and mindful that knowledge is a blessing from Allah, not a sign of personal superiority.
- Give priority to learning what is most beneficial—especially that which improves your worship, belief, and character.
- Be consistent in attending gatherings of knowledge, whether in person or through reliable means, and treat them with seriousness and respect.
- Convey knowledge with caution and sincerity, ensuring that what is shared is sound and properly understood.
- Frequently supplicate to Allah for an increase in beneficial knowledge, as He has commanded: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge."

Section Two: The Path to Bearing Islamic Sacred Knowledge

Summary of Section 2:

This section outlines the path by which a student attains and carries Islamic sacred knowledge, emphasizing that it is not acquired through intellect alone, but through a combination of sound understanding and purification of the heart. The author explains that students of knowledge differ according to the presence or absence of these two qualities—intelligence and inner rectitude—and that true success lies in combining both. He then details the stages of acquiring knowledge, beginning with attentive listening and understanding, followed by memorization, implementation, and ultimately teaching. Alongside this, the section highlights the essential etiquettes of the student, such as sincerity, proper time management, and keeping righteous company. It also warns against common obstacles, including attachment to worldly comforts, heedlessness, and seeking knowledge for other than Allah. Altogether, this section presents a comprehensive framework showing that the path to knowledge is one of discipline, sincerity, and continuous self-rectification, culminating in both personal reform and benefit to others.

Topic One: The Student of Knowledge's Need for Intelligence and Purity

If you were to examine the various types of students of knowledge, you would find that they do not fall outside of three categories:

The First Category of Students of Knowledge

The first category consists of one who has been granted:

- intelligence and understanding (الذكاء *dhakā'*: sharpness of intellect and sound comprehension), together with
- purity of the soul (الزكاء *zakā'*: inner rectitude, sincerity, and moral refinement).

His intelligence drives him to earnestness in seeking knowledge and striving to attain it, while the purity and cleanliness of his soul drive him to act upon this knowledge and apply it.

The Second Category of Students of Knowledge

The second category consists of one who has been granted intelligence but not purity. His intelligence drives him to memorize knowledge and acquire it, but the lack of purity prevents him from acting upon it and applying it. Thus, his knowledge becomes an argument against him, not an argument for him, on the Day of Resurrection.

The Third Category of Students of Knowledge

The third category is one who is deprived of both: he possesses neither the intelligence by which knowledge is attained, nor the purity by which knowledge is put into practice.

An Elucidation of These Categories in Light of a Ḥadīth

These three categories were mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ in the authentic ḥadīth reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥs from Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet ﷺ, that he said:

إِنَّ مَثَلَ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْعِلْمِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَصَابَ أَرْضًا، فَكَانَتْ مِنْهَا طَائِفَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ

قَبِلَتِ الْمَاءَ فَأَنْبَتَتِ الْكَلَأَ وَالْعُشْبَ الْكَثِيرَ، وَكَانَ مِنْهَا أَجَادِبُ أَمْسَكَتِ الْمَاءَ فَنَفَعَ اللَّهُ بِهَا النَّاسَ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهَا وَسَقَوْا وَزَرَعُوا، وَأَصَابَ طَائِفَةً مِنْهَا أُخْرَىٰ إِنَّمَا هِيَ قِيعَانٌ لَا تُمْسِكُ مَاءً وَلَا تُنْبِتُ كَلَأً. فَذٰلِكَ مَثَلُ مَنْ فَقِهَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ وَنَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِهِ فَعَلِمَ وَعَلَّمَ، وَمَثَلُ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْفَعْ بِذٰلِكَ رَأْسًا وَلَمْ يَقْبَلْ هُدَى اللَّهِ الَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ

"The likeness of the guidance and knowledge with which Allah – Mighty and Majestic – has sent me is that of abundant rain which falls upon the land. Some of it is good soil that absorbs the water and produces abundant vegetation and grass. Some of it is barren land that retains the water, by which Allah benefits people: they drink from it, water their animals, and cultivate crops. And some of it is flat ground that neither holds water nor produces vegetation. That is the likeness of one who gains understanding of the religion of Allah and whom Allah benefits by what He sent me with – so he learns and teaches – and the likeness of one who does not raise his head to it and does not accept the guidance of Allah with which I was sent."[37]

In this ḥadīth, the Prophet ﷺ likened the knowledge he was sent with to rainfall, because both knowledge and rain are causes of life: rain is the cause of life for bodies, and knowledge is the cause of life for hearts. He also likened hearts to valleys. Just as lands are of three types with respect to their reception of rainfall:

The first type is fertile land, pure and receptive to both drinking and vegetation. When rain falls upon it, it becomes saturated, and from it grows vegetation of every delightful kind.

This is the likeness of the pure and intelligent heart: it receives knowledge through its intelligence, and it bears fruit—manifesting forms of wisdom

[37] Saheeh Bukhārī 79, Saheeh Muslim 228

and the true religion—through its purity. It is receptive to knowledge and productive in accordance with its requirements, its understanding, and the inner realities of its sources.

The second type is solid land, capable of retaining what it holds and preserving it. This land benefits people, for they come to it, draw water from it, and cultivate crops.

This is the likeness of the heart that preserves knowledge—it memorizes it exactly as it heard it. It preserves knowledge in a purely retentive manner, conveying it just as it received it. This corresponds to the category described by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he said:

فَرُبَّ حَامِلِ فِقْهٍ إِلَىٰ مَنْ هُوَ أَفْقَهُ مِنْهُ. وَرُبَّ حَامِلِ فِقْهٍ غَيْرُ فَقِيهٍ

Perhaps a carrier of knowledge conveys it to one who is more understanding than him, and perhaps a carrier of knowledge is not himself truly understanding."[38]

The third type of land is flat, barren ground—level terrain that neither accepts vegetation nor retains water. No matter how much rain falls upon it, it gains no benefit from it whatsoever.

This is the likeness of the heart that does not accept knowledge, understanding, or comprehension. Rather, it is like barren land that neither produces nor preserves.

Thus, **the first category of people** is the learned scholar who teaches and calls to Allah with clear insight. This person is among the heirs of the Messengers, and he is the one intended by the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

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[38] Musnad Aḥmad 3/225, Sunan Ibn Mājah 236

مَن فَقُهَ في دينِ اللهِ، ونَفَعَه [ما بَعَثَني اللهُ] به، فعَلِمَ وعَلَّمَ

"The likeness of one who gains understanding of the religion of Allah and whom Allah benefits by it – so he learns and teaches."[39]

The second category is one who was granted intelligence but deprived of purity; through his intelligence he memorized knowledge and transmitted it to others.[40]

The third category possesses neither this nor that. He has been deprived of both intelligence and purity; consequently, he did not accept the guidance

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[39] Saheeh Bukhari 79

[40] Another possible interpretation of the types of land mentioned in the ḥadīth is as follows:

- The first type of land—upon which vegetation grows when rain falls—is like the heart that combines sound understanding with sincerity of intention. Such a person not only receives knowledge, but comprehends it, acts upon it, and brings forth benefit. This is the heart that fully benefits from the "rain" of revelation.

- The second type resembles land that retains water but does not produce vegetation. This may be likened to one who preserves knowledge and conveys it to others but does not fully understand it or derive rulings from it. This is similar to some narrators of ḥadīth who accurately transmitted reports but were not among the fuqahāʾ (jurists) who extract meanings and rulings from them. In other words, the fuqahāʾ took what the narrators conveyed and derived benefit from it. It may also refer to one who possesses intelligence and understanding but lacks sincerity, and therefore does not act upon his knowledge. An example of this can be seen in many scholars of Islamic Studies in Western academia who teach Islam, fiqh, and other Islamic sciences but are not themselves Muslim. Despite this, others may still benefit from what they transmit, just as stored water benefits those who use it while the land itself does not benefit from it.

- The third type is barren land that neither retains water nor produces growth. This represents the one who possesses neither understanding nor sincerity; he neither benefits from knowledge nor allows others to benefit through him. Such a person is entirely deprived of the guidance brought by revelation.

of Allah, nor did he raise his head toward it.

Thus, this ḥadīth comprehensively encompasses the categories of people in their respective stances toward Islamic sacred knowledge. From it, one learns that the student of knowledge must possess two inseparable qualities in order to attain knowledge: intelligence and purity.

He must possess purity of the soul, soundness of inner disposition, and uprightness in religion—so that these qualities may drive him toward:

1. Sincerity of purpose and rectification of intention in seeking knowledge.
2. Restraining the impulses of desire and heedlessness that hinder the pursuit of knowledge.
3. Repelling doubts that turn one away from seeking the truth.
4. Fulfilling the right of this knowledge through learning, acting upon it, and teaching it.

He must also possess intelligence to assist him in acquiring knowledge and striving earnestly in its pursuit.

When Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with them both) asked Daghfal ibn Ḥanẓalah, saying:

يَا دُغْفُلُ، مِنْ أَيْنَ حَفِظْتَ هٰذَا؟

"O Daghfal, from where did you retain all of this?"

He replied:

حَفِظْتُ هٰذَا بِقَلْبٍ عَقُولٍ وَلِسَانٍ سَؤُولٍ

"I retained it with a discerning mind and a questioning tongue."[41]

Thus, one must have an intellect by which he is able to acquire knowledge through the best and easiest paths, so that this may assist him in understanding the texts and comprehending issues once they are fully grasped.

Two Faculties of Human Beings

The need of the servant for intelligence and purity is further emphasized by the fact that the human being, by nature, possesses two faculties:

First: the faculty of perception and reflection, and what follows from it of knowledge and understanding. This is the theoretical, cognitive faculty, which we have here termed *intelligence*.

Second: the faculty of will and inclination, and what follows from it of intention, resolve, and action. This is the practical, applicative faculty.

For this reason, the foundation of faith revolves around two fundamental principles:

The first principle: affirming the truth of the message, which pertains to the theoretical, cognitive faculty.

The second principle: obeying the command, which pertains to the practical, volitional faculty.

Two further matters follow from these:

The first: repelling false doubts that hinder the perfection of affirmation.

The second: repelling misguided desires that hinder the perfection of

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[41] Jami Bayan Al-Ilm Wa Fadhluhu 1/378

compliance.

This is because doubt corrupts the theoretical, cognitive faculty unless a person treats it by repelling it—and repelling it is only achieved through sound knowledge.

Likewise, desire corrupts the practical, volitional faculty unless a person treats it through purification of the soul.

For this reason, Allah said regarding His Prophet ﷺ:

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى

"Your companion has neither strayed nor erred." (al-Najm 53:2)

His statement, مَا ضَلَّ *"has not strayed,"* is evidence of the perfection of his knowledge and understanding, and that he was upon manifest truth.

And His statement, مَا غَوَى *"nor has he erred,"* is evidence of the perfection of his sound judgment and guidance, and that he was the most rightly guided of all people.

He ﷺ also described his successors after him with these qualities, saying:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي

"Adhere to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me."[42]

For one who is *rāshid* (rightly guided) is the opposite of الغاوي, the one who is led astray, and one who is *mahdī* (guided) is the opposite of الضال, the one who is misguided.

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[42] Musnad Ahmed 4/126–127, Sunan Abū Dāwūd 4607, Jami Tirmidhī 2676

For this reason, the texts have come exhorting the pursuit, acquisition, and attainment of knowledge, as well as urging the purification of the soul and the soundness of the heart.

The Necessity of Purifying the Hearts

Among what has been transmitted concerning the necessity of purifying the heart is the saying of Allah, the Exalted:

فَإِنَّهَا لا تَعْمَى الأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُور

"For indeed it is not the eyes that go blind, but the hearts within the breasts that go blind." (al-Ḥajj 22:46)

And the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ كُلُّهُ،

أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

"Indeed, in the body there is a morsel of flesh: if it is sound, the whole body is sound; and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Indeed, it is the heart."[43]

Thus, the student of knowledge must be keen to safeguard the soundness of his heart, for that is what will benefit him before Allah. Allah, the Exalted, says:

يَوْمَ لا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلا بَنُونَ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

"On the Day when neither wealth nor children will avail, except one who comes to Allah with a sound heart." (al-Shuʿarāʾ 26:88–89)

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[43] Saheeh Bukhārī 52, Saheeh Muslim 107

[The attributes of a sound heart are as follows:]

- The **sound heart** (*al-qalb al-salīm*) is the one that is free from polytheism, free from religious innovations, free from deviation, and free from falsehood.
- It is the heart that has submitted fully to the servitude of its Lord—out of reverence, fear, hope, and longing.
- It gives precedence to the love of Allah over the love of all others, to fear of Him over fear of all others, and to hope in Him over hope in all others.
- It submits to the command of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ with affirmation and obedience, and it surrenders to the decree and destiny of Allah.
- As a result, it consigns all of its states, words, and actions—outwardly and inwardly—to Allah alone.[44]

Therefore, the student of knowledge must purify his heart from every form of deceit, filth, malice, envy, corruption of belief, and immoral character. Through this, the heart becomes fit to receive knowledge, preserve it, and perceive the subtleties of its meanings and the realities of its deeper complexities.

Indeed, knowledge—as some have said—is the prayer of the inner self, the worship of the heart, and the means of nearness of the inward being.

Just as the prayer – which is the worship of the outward limbs – is not valid except with outward purity from ritual impurity and filth, so too knowledge – which is the worship of the heart – is not

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[44] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/41–42).

sound except with its purification from vile traits and corrupt, blameworthy character.

When the heart is refined and made wholesome for knowledge, its blessing becomes manifest and it flourishes—just as the earth, when prepared for cultivation, causes its crops to grow and thrive.

Sahl al-Tustarī[45] (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

حَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ قَلْبٍ أَنْ يَدْخُلَهُ النُّورُ وَفِيهِ شَيْءٌ مِمَّا يَكْرَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

"It is forbidden for light to enter a heart in which there remains anything that Allah – Mighty and Majestic – dislikes."[46]

Imām al-Shāfiʿī said:[47]

شَكَوْتُ إِلَىٰ وَكِيعٍ سُوءَ حِفْظِي

فَأَرْشَدَنِي إِلَىٰ تَرْكِ الْمَعَاصِي

وَأَعْلَمَنِي بِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ

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[45] Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283 AH / 896 CE), Abū Muḥammad Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī, was a distinguished early Sunnī scholar, ascetic, and spiritual teacher from Tustar (in al-Ahwāz). Renowned for his deep piety and profound insight, he was among the early figures who emphasized the purification of the heart, constant remembrance of Allah, and sincerity in worship. He memorized the Qur'an at a young age and lived a life marked by asceticism, devotion, and reflection. Sahl is especially known for his early spiritual commentary on the Qur'an, in which he highlighted both its outward and inward meanings, and for his many sayings on sincerity, intention, and the inner life. He died in Baṣrah after a life devoted to knowledge, worship, and spiritual refinement.

[46] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ wa l Mutakallim, p. 67.

[47] Dīwān al Shāfiʿī, p. 54, compiled by Muḥammad ʿAfīf al Zughbī.

وَنُورُ اللَّهِ لَا يُؤْتَى لِعَاصِ

I complained to Wakīʿ of the weakness of my memory,
So he directed me to abandon sins.

And he informed me that knowledge is light,
And the light of Allah is not granted to one who disobeys.

Topic Two: The Stages of Attaining Knowledge

Attaining knowledge has stages that the student of knowledge must observe, so that through them he may reach knowledge by the closest path and the easiest means. The scholars have mentioned these stages [as can be seen from the two examples given below] and clarified them for students of knowledge so that they may adhere to them.

Imam Ibn al-Mubārak[48] said:

أَوَّلُ الْعِلْمِ النِّيَّةُ، ثُمَّ الِاسْتِمَاعُ، ثُمَّ الْفَهْمُ، ثُمَّ الْحِفْظُ، ثُمَّ الْعَمَلُ، ثُمَّ النَّشْرُ

"The beginning of knowledge is intention, then listening, then understanding, then memorization, then acting, then dissemination."[49]

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[48] ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 AH / 797 CE) was a renowned scholar of ḥadīth, fiqh, and asceticism from the early generations, originally from Merv (in present-day Turkmenistan). He was of Persian origin and became one of the most respected imams of his time, known for combining deep knowledge with piety, generosity, and participation in jihād. He studied under leading scholars such as Sufyān al-Thawrī and al-Awzāʿī, and in turn taught many students. Ibn al-Mubārak was also a prolific writer, authoring works on ḥadīth, asceticism, and manners, and he is widely praised by the scholars for his integrity, humility, and commitment to both knowledge and action.

[49] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 759 (1/476)

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said that knowledge has six stages:

- The first: asking good questions.
- The second: good attentiveness and listening.
- The third: sound understanding.
- The fourth: memorization.
- The fifth: teaching.
- The sixth—and this is its fruit—is acting upon it and observing its limits."

Asking Questions

As for the first stage, it is asking good questions. Some people are deprived of knowledge due to poor questioning—either because they do not ask at all, or because they ask about something while something else is more important for them than it, like one who asks about matters of idle curiosity whose ignorance causes no harm, while neglecting what he cannot do without knowing. This is the condition of many ignorant learners.

ʿĀʾishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ نِسَاءَ الْأَنْصَارِ، لَمْ يَمْنَعْهُنَّ الْحَيَاءُ أَنْ يَسْأَلْنَ عَنْ أَمْرِ دِينِهِنَّ

"May Allah have mercy on the women of the Anṣār; modesty did not prevent them from asking about matters of their religion."[50]

[And as mentioned earlier,] Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with them both) asked Daghfal ibn Ḥanẓalah, saying: "O Daghfal, from where did you retain all of this?" He replied: "I retained it with a

[50] Saheeh Muslim 332

discerning mind (*Qalbin Aqool*) and a *questioning* tongue (*Lisanin Sa'ool*)."[51]

Ibn ʿAbbās (may Allah be pleased with them both) said:

ذَلَلْتُ طَالِبًا فَعَزَزْتُ مَطْلُوبًا

"I humbled myself as a seeker, and so I was honored as one sought."[52]

He is also reported to have said:

وَجَدْتُ عَامَّةَ عِلْمِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عِنْدَ هٰذَا الْحَيِّ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ، إِنْ كُنْتُ لَأَقِيلُ عِنْدَ بَابِ أَحَدِهِمْ، وَلَوْ شِئْتُ أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لِي لَأُذِنَ لِي، وَلٰكِنْ أَبْتَغِي بِذٰلِكَ طِيبَ نَفْسِهِ

"I found most of the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with this clan of the Anṣār. I would come and lie down at the door of one of them, though had I wished he would have given me permission to enter; but I sought by that to win the goodwill of his soul."[53]

Imam Abū Isḥāq[54] said:

قَالَ عَلِيٌّ كَلِمَاتٍ لَوْ رَحَلْتُمُ الْمَطِيَّ فِيهِنَّ لَأَفْنَيْتُمُوهُنَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُدْرِكُوا مِثْلَهُنَّ: لَا يَرْجُوَنَّ عَبْدٌ إِلَّا رَبَّهُ، وَلَا

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[51] This narration was mentioned previously to explain the quality of Qalb. Here it is presented again to explain the quality of the Lisan.

[52] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 756 (1/474)

[53] Sunan al Dārimī (1/141), al ʿIlm Li Abi Khaythamah p. 133

[54] Abū Isḥāq is mentioned in reference to Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī, whose full name was ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Hamdānī (d. 127 AH / 745 CE). He was a distinguished tābiʿī from Kūfah and a renowned scholar of ḥadīth and Qur'ān. He studied under a number of Companions, including ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ibn Masʿūd, and others (may Allah be pleased with them all), and later taught many students from the next generation. He was known for his knowledge, piety, and extensive narration of ḥadīth, though in his later years his memory declined slightly. Despite this, he remains a reliable and widely cited authority in the early Islamic tradition.

يَخَافَنَّ إِلَّا ذَنْبَهُ، وَلَا يَسْتَحْيِ مَنْ لَا يَعْلَمُ أَنْ يَتَعَلَّمَ، وَلَا يَسْتَحْيِ إِذَا سُئِلَ عَمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُ أَنْ يَقُولَ: لَا أَعْلَمُ، وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ مَنْزِلَةَ الصَّبْرِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ كَمَنْزِلَةِ الرَّأْسِ مِنَ الْجَسَدِ، فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الرَّأْسُ ذَهَبَ الْجَسَدُ، وَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الصَّبْرُ ذَهَبَ الْإِيمَانُ

Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) said words such that, if you were to exhaust your riding beasts in pursuit of them, you would wear them out before attaining their like: 'Let no servant place hope in anyone but his Lord; let him fear nothing but his sin; let one who does not know not be too shy to learn; and let one who is asked about what he does not know not be too shy to say: I do not know. Know that the position of patience in relation to faith is like the position of the head in relation to the body: if the head is severed, the body perishes; and if patience is lost, faith is lost.'"[55]

It is reported from some of the scholars that they said:

لَا يَنَالُ الْعِلْمَ مستحٍ وَلَا مُتَكَبِّرٍ، هٰذَا يَمْنَعُهُ حَيَاؤُهُ مِنَ التَّعَلُّمِ، وَهٰذَا يَمْنَعُهُ كِبْرُهُ

"Knowledge is not attained by one who is excessively shy nor by one who is arrogant: the former is prevented by his shyness from learning, and the latter is prevented by his pride."[56]

This approach—namely, not being too shy to ask and not being too arrogant to learn—is praised in the pursuit of knowledge because it serves as a means to attaining it; thus, it forms part of a person's perfection and leads to the completion of his character.

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[55] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 547, 548 (1/383)

[56] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/168)

The following is reported from Imam Al-Hasan Al-Basri:

مَنْ اسْتَتَرَ عَنْ طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ بِالْحَيَاءِ لَبِسَ لِلْجَهْلِ سِرْبَالَهُ، فَاقْطَعُوا سَرَابِيلَ الْجَهْلِ عَنْكُمْ بِدَفْعِ الْحَيَاءِ فِي الْعِلْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ رَقَّ وَجْهُهُ رَقَّ عِلْمُهُ

"Whoever conceals himself from seeking knowledge out of shyness has clothed himself in the garments of ignorance. So tear away from yourselves the garments of ignorance by casting off shyness in matters of knowledge, for whoever's face is delicate, his knowledge will be delicate."[57]

And al-Khalīl[58] (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

مَنْزِلَةُ الْجَهْلِ بَيْنَ الْحَيَاءِ وَالْأَنَفَةِ

"The station of ignorance lies between shyness and haughtiness."[59]

It is narrated of the words of ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said:

قُرِنَتِ الْهَيْبَةُ بِالْخَيْبَةِ، وَالْحَيَاءُ بِالْحِرْمَانِ

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[57] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 550 (1/383)

[58] Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 175 AH / 791 CE) was a distinguished scholar of the Arabic language from Baṣrah and one of the foremost authorities of the early generations. He is best known for founding the science of Arabic prosody (ʿarūḍ), by which the meters of Arabic poetry are understood, and for authoring Kitāb al-ʿAyn, regarded as the earliest Arabic dictionary. He was the teacher of the renowned grammarian Sībawayh and was known for his exceptional intelligence, precision, and deep understanding of the language. Alongside his scholarship, he was also recognized for his piety, humility, and ascetic lifestyle, and his sayings are frequently cited in works related to knowledge, language, and refinement of character.

[59] Ibid. no. 551 (1/384)

"Awe is paired with failure, and excessive shyness is paired with deprivation."[60]

Ibrāhīm[61] said to al-Manṣūr[62]:

سَلْ مَسْأَلَةَ الْحُمْقَىٰ، وَاحْفَظْ حِفْظَ الْأَكْيَاسِ

"Ask like the ignorant, but memorize like the wise."[63]

Likewise, asking people is generally considered to be a flaw, a deficiency in a man, and a humiliation that contradicts dignity—except in matters of knowledge, for in that case it is the very essence of his perfection, dignity, and honor. As some of the people of knowledge have said:

خَيْرُ خِصَالِ الرَّجُلِ السُّؤَالُ عَنِ الْعِلْمِ

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[60] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 549 (1/383)

[61] Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 162 AH / 778 CE) was a renowned ascetic and spiritual figure of the early generations, originally from Balkh in Khurāsān. He is widely remembered for abandoning a life of wealth and status in pursuit of devotion and the Hereafter, becoming an exemplar of zuhd (asceticism) and sincerity. He traveled extensively, seeking knowledge and companionship of the righteous, and was known for his humility, wisdom, and profound sayings on detachment from the world and reliance upon Allah. His statements are frequently cited in classical works on spirituality and ethics, and he remains a model of turning away from worldly distractions toward a life of obedience and reflection.

[62] Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr (d. 158 AH / 775 CE) was the second ʿAbbāsid caliph and one of the most influential rulers of the early Islamic period. He is credited with consolidating the foundations of the ʿAbbāsid state and establishing Baghdad as its capital, which later became a center of learning and civilization. Al-Manṣūr was known for his administrative skill, political strength, and patronage of knowledge, and he maintained close interaction with scholars, jurists, and ascetics of his time. Despite his authority, he is often mentioned in classical works as receiving counsel and admonition from the scholars, reflecting the dynamic relationship between rulers and the people of knowledge in that era.

[63] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 560 (1/387)

"The best trait of a man is to ask about knowledge."[64]

And ʿAlī (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Ask me!" So Ibn al-Kawwā' stood and asked about certain matters, whereupon ʿAlī said:

وَيْلَكَ، سَلْ تَفَقُّهًا وَلَا تَسْأَلْ تَعَنُّتًا...

"Woe to you—ask in order to gain understanding, and do not ask out of obstinacy…"[65]

Ibn al-Aʿrābī (may Allah be pleased with him) recited:

فَسَلِ الْفَقِيهَ تَكُنْ فَقِيهًا مِثْلَهُ، مَنْ يَسْعَ فِي الْعِلْمِ بِبَذْلٍ يَمْهَرُ

So ask the jurist, and you will become a jurist like him; For whoever strives in knowledge with humility becomes skilled.[66]

Good Attentiveness and Listenning

As for the second stage, it is good attentiveness and listening. Some people are deprived of knowledge due to poor listening, such that speaking and disputation are more beloved and preferable to them than listening. This is a hidden affliction found in many souls that try to seek knowledge, and it prevents them from acquiring much of it—even if they possess intelligence.

Imam Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr[67] mentioned from some of the early scholars that they

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[64] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah, p. 168.

[65] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 736 (1/464)

[66] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih (1/381); see also Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/168–169).

[67] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463 AH / 1071 CE), Abū ʿUmar Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, was a distinguished Andalusian scholar of ḥadīth, fiqh, and biography. He was one of the leading Mālikī scholars of his time and is especially known for his vast knowledge and precision in

said:

مَنْ كَانَ حَسَنَ الْفَهْمِ رَدِيءَ الِاسْتِمَاعِ لَمْ يَقُمْ خَيْرُهُ بِشَرِّهِ

"Whoever has good understanding but poor listening, his good will not outweigh his harm."[68]

Imam Al-Zuhrī[69] said:

كَانَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ يَسْأَلُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ فَكَانَ يُعْرِضُ عَنْهُ، وَكَانَ عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُتْبَةَ يُلَاطِفُهُ فَيَغْرُّهُ غَرًّا، وَقَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ: لَوْ رَفَقْتُ بِابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ لَاسْتَخْرَجْتُ مِنْهُ عِلْمًا كَثِيرًا

"Abū Salamah used to question Ibn ʿAbbās [a lot], and he would turn away from him. Meanwhile, ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah would approach him gently and draw knowledge out of him gently. Abū Salamah later said: "Had I been gentle with Ibn ʿAbbās, I would have extracted a great deal of knowledge from him."[70]

ḥadīth. Among his most famous works are al-Tamhīd and al-Istidhkār, both of which are major commentaries on al-Muwaṭṭaʾ of Imām Mālik, as well as al-Istīʿāb, a well-known biographical work on the Companions. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr was widely praised by the scholars for his mastery of knowledge, sound understanding, and commitment to the Sunnah, and his works remain widely referenced in Islamic scholarship.

[68] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 699 (1/448)

[69] Al-Zuhrī (d. 124 AH / 742 CE), whose full name was Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, was a renowned scholar of ḥadīth and fiqh from the early generations. He was among the tābiʿūn and studied under a number of Companions, including Anas ibn Mālik and others (may Allah SWT be pleased with them all). Al-Zuhrī is especially known for being one of the first scholars to systematically compile ḥadīth at the instruction of the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (may Allah be pleased with him). He was highly regarded for his precision, strong memory, and depth of knowledge, and many leading scholars, including Mālik ibn Anas and Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah, narrated from him.

[70] al Jāmiʿ by al Khaṭīb 384,385 (1/317)

Imam Ibn Jurayj[71] said:

مَا اسْتَخْرَجْتُ الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي اسْتَخْرَجْتُ مِنْ عَطَاءٍ إِلَّا بِرِفْقِي بِهِ

"I did not draw out the knowledge I gained from ʿAṭāʾ except through my gentleness and considerate approach with him."[72]

And some of the early scholars said:

إِذَا جَالَسْتَ الْعَالِمَ فَكُنْ عَلَى أَنْ تَسْمَعَ أَحْرَصَ مِنْكَ عَلَى أَنْ تَقُولَ

"When you sit with a scholar, be more eager to listen than to speak."[73]

Sound Understanding

The third stage is sound understanding. Allah, the Exalted, says:

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

"Indeed, in that is a reminder for one who has a heart, or who listens while he is present." (Qāf 50:37)

Reflect upon what lies beneath these words of treasures of knowledge and how observing them opens for the servant the doors of knowledge and

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[71] Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 AH / 767 CE), whose full name was ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Jurayj al-Makkī, was a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth and fiqh from Makkah and among the early generation of tābiʿ al-tābiʿīn. He studied under leading scholars such as ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ (may Allah be pleased with him) and was one of the earliest scholars to compile knowledge into written form. Ibn Jurayj is known for his extensive narrations and contributions to the transmission of knowledge, particularly in the traditions of Makkah. Although some discussion exists among scholars regarding his use of *tadlīs*, he is nevertheless regarded as a reliable and significant authority in ḥadīth, and many later scholars narrated from him.

[72] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 625 (1/423)

[73] Ibid. no. 845 (1/521)

guidance—and how the door of knowledge is shut by neglecting them and failing to observe them. For He—Glorified is He—has commanded His servants to reflect upon His recited, heard, and witnessed signs, such that they become a reminder for one who has a heart.

Whoever lacks a heart that is conscious of Allah does not benefit from any ayah that passes before him, even if every ayah were to pass by him. The passing of ayaat by such a person is like the rising and setting of the sun, the moon, and the stars for one who has no sight. But if he possesses a heart, then he is like a sighted person when visible things pass before him—he sees them.

However, the possessor of a heart does not benefit from his heart except through two matters.

- The first of them is that he brings it forth and makes it present for what is being conveyed to him. If it is absent—wandering through wishes, desires, and imaginings—he does not benefit from it.
- When he brings it forth and makes it present, he still does not benefit unless he casts his hearing attentively and listens with his full being to what he is being admonished with and guided toward.

Thus, there are three matters here:

1. Soundness and health of the heart, and its receptivity.
2. Its presence, collection, and restraint from distraction and dispersion.
3. Casting one's hearing, attentive listening, and full engagement with the reminder.

Allah—the Exalted—mentioned all these three matters in the *ayah*

mentioned above.

Memorization

The fourth stage is memorization. Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad said:

مَا سَمِعْتُ شَيْئًا إِلَّا كَتَبْتُهُ، وَلَا كَتَبْتُهُ إِلَّا حَفِظْتُهُ، وَلَا حَفِظْتُهُ إِلَّا نَفَعَنِي

"I never heard anything except that I wrote it down; I never wrote it down except that I memorized it; and I never memorized it except that it benefited me."[74]

And it is reported from Imam al-Shaʿbī[75] that he said:

كُنَّا نَسْتَعِينُ عَلَى حِفْظِ الْحَدِيثِ بِالْعَمَلِ بِهِ

"We used to seek assistance in memorizing ḥadīth by acting upon it."[76]

Acting Upon the Knowledge

As for the fifth stage, it is acting upon knowledge. Some of the early scholars said:

كُنَّا نَسْتَعِينُ عَلَى حِفْظِ الْعِلْمِ بِالْعَمَلِ بِهِ

"We used to seek assistance in preserving knowledge by acting upon it."

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[74] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 447 (1/335)

[75] Al-Shaʿbī (d. 103 AH / 721 CE), whose full name was ʿĀmir ibn Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī, was a distinguished tābiʿī from Kūfah and one of the most knowledgeable scholars of his time. He studied under a large number of Companions—reported to be over five hundred—and became renowned for his expertise in ḥadīth, fiqh, and genealogy. Al-Shaʿbī was known for his sharp intellect, strong memory, and eloquence, and he served as a teacher to many students of the next generation. His statements and narrations are widely cited in classical Islamic scholarship, and he is regarded as a reliable and authoritative figure among the early scholars.

[76] Ibid. (1/709), no. 1284.

And some of the early scholars also said:

الْعِلْمُ يَهْتِفُ بِالْعَمَلِ، فَإِنْ أَجَابَهُ حَلَّ، وَإِلَّا ارْتَحَلَ

"Knowledge calls out to action: if action responds, it remains; otherwise, it departs."[77]

Thus, acting upon knowledge is among the greatest causes of its preservation and firmness, while neglecting to act upon it is a squandering of it. The knowledge is neither drawn forth nor acquired by anything like acting upon it. Allah, the Exalted, says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ

"O you who believe, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will grant you a double share of His mercy and will provide for you a light by which you will walk."

(al-Ḥadīd 57:28)

Spreading and Teaching Knowledge:

As for the sixth stage, it is spreading and teaching knowledge.

It has been said:

مَا صِينَ الْعِلْمُ بِمِثْلِ الْعَمَلِ بِهِ وَبَذْلِهِ لِأَهْلِهِ

"Knowledge has never been safeguarded by anything like acting upon it and imparting it to those worthy of it."[78]

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[77] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 1274 (1/707)

[78] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 789 (1/496)

Imam Ibn al-Qāsim[79] said:

كُنَّا إِذَا وَدَّعْنَا مَالِكًا يَقُولُ لَنَا: اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَانْشُرُوا هٰذَا الْعِلْمَ وَعَلِّمُوهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوهُ

"Whenever we used to take leave of Mālik, he would say to us: 'Fear Allah, spread this knowledge, teach it, and do not conceal it.'"[80]

And Imam Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī[81] said:

نَشْرُ الْعِلْمِ حَيَاتُهُ، وَالْبَلَاغُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَحْمَةٌ، يَعْتَصِمُ بِهِ كُلُّ مُؤْمِنٍ، وَيَكُونُ حُجَّةً عَلَى كُلِّ مُقِرٍّ بِهِ وَمُلْحِدٍ

"Spreading knowledge is its life and conveying it from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a mercy by which every believer seeks protection, and by which it becomes a proof against every one who affirms it or denies it."[82]

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[79] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim al-ʿUtaqī al-Miṣrī (d. 191 AH / 806 CE) was one of the foremost students of Imām Mālik ibn Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) and among the leading transmitters of the Mālikī school. He accompanied Mālik for many years and became one of the most authoritative figures in conveying his teachings. Ibn al-Qāsim is especially known for his role in transmitting al-Mudawwanah, one of the foundational texts of Mālikī fiqh, which preserves many of Mālik's legal opinions. He was known for his deep understanding, precision, and strong adherence to his teacher's methodology, and he is regarded as one of the key figures in the formation and spread of the Mālikī madhhab.

[80] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 781 (1/496)

[81] Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277 AH / 890 CE), whose full name was Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Ḥanẓalī al-Rāzī, was a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth and one of the leading critics of narrators (imams of al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl). He was from Rayy (in present-day Iran) and traveled extensively in search of knowledge, studying under many great scholars of his time. He became renowned for his precision, deep insight into ḥadīth criticism, and strong memor. Abū Ḥātim was widely respected among the scholars for his rigor, integrity, and mastery in evaluating narrators, and his judgments remain highly authoritative in the science of ḥadīth.

[82] Sharaf Aṣḥāb al Ḥadīth, p. 17.

Summary of Topic 2:

Deprivation of knowledge occurs through neglecting these six aspects:

- **The first:** abandoning questioning.
- **The second:** poor attentiveness and failure to cast one's hearing.
- **The third:** poor understanding.
- **The fourth:** lack of memorization.
- **The fifth:** failing to spread and teach knowledge; for whoever hoards his knowledge and does not disseminate it or teach it, Allah afflicts him with forgetting it and its loss—an outcome commensurate with his deeds. This is a matter attested to by experience and reality.
- **The sixth:** failing to act upon knowledge; for acting upon it necessitates remembering it, reflecting upon it, observing it, and examining it. When acting upon it is neglected, it is forgotten.

Topic Three: The Etiquette of the Student of Knowledge

The student of knowledge must observe a number of matters with which he adorns himself while traversing the path of knowledge. Among them are the following:

Sound intention in seeking knowledge

The first etiquette is that the seeker should have a sound intention in seeking knowledge—that he intend by it the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted; acting upon it; reviving the Sharīʿah; illuminating his heart and adorning his inner self; drawing nearer to Allah on the Day of Resurrection; and exposing himself to what Allah has prepared for its people of His pleasure and immense bounty.

Imam Sufyān al-Thawrī said:

مَا عَالَجْتُ شَيْئًا أَشَدَّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ نِيَّتِي

"I have not struggled with anything more difficult upon me than my intention."[83]

Nor should he intend by it worldly aims such as attaining leadership, status, wealth, boasting before peers, seeking people's veneration, or being given prominence in gatherings, and the like—thus exchanging *what is lesser (Al-Adna) for what is better (Al-Khayr)*[84].

For when intention in knowledge is sincere, it flourishes, its blessing grows, and it increases; but if it is sought for other than the sake of Allah, the Exalted, it is nullified and lost, its transaction fails, and its seeker incurs loss. Indeed, he may even be deprived of those worldly aims themselves, failing to attain them—so his intention is frustrated and his effort wasted.[85]

Guarding Against Procrastination

The second etiquette is that the seeker should hasten, while still young, and devote the times of his life to acquisition, and not be deceived by the tricks of procrastination and false hopes. For every hour that passes from one's life has no replacement and no compensation. He should seize the time of his leisure and vigor, the period of his well-being, the prime of his youth, the

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[83] al Jāmiʿ by al Khaṭīb 699 (1/494)

[84] The author skillfully and subtly incorporates Qurʾānic expressions and terminology throughout the work. This particular phrase echoes the wording of a beautiful āyah, illustrating how Banī Isrāʾīl exchanged that which descended from the heavens for that which sprang forth from the earth.

أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ

"Do you exchange what is inferior for what is better?" (Al-Baqarah 2:61)

[85] Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa-l-Mutakallim, pp. 68–70 (adapted)

sharpness of his mind, and the fewness of distractions—before the onset of idleness or the obstacles of rank and position.[86]

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

تَفَقَّهُوا قَبْلَ أَنْ تَسُودُوا

"Gain understanding before you are placed in positions of authority."[87]

And Imam al-Shāfiʿī said:

تَفَقَّهْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَرْأَسَ، فَإِذَا رَأَسْتَ فَلَا سَبِيلَ إِلَى التَّفَقُّهِ

"Seek understanding before you rise to leadership; for once you have risen, there is no way to pursue deep learning."[88]

He should strive to cut off, as far as he is able, all distracting attachments and obstructing impediments that hinder the completion of his pursuit, weaken his exertion, and diminish the strength of his resolve in attaining

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[86] The following hadith highlights the importance of making the best use of the resources and opportunities Allah SWT has blessed us with:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ

Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death." (Shu'ab al-Iman lil-Bayhaqi 10250 – Saheeh)

[87] Reported as a suspended narration (Ta'leeq) by Imam Bukhārī (1/166); also narrated by Ibn Abī Shaybah in al-Muṣannaf (8/540), al-Dārimī in Sunan al-Dārimī (1/79), and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʻIlm wa-Faḍlih 508 (1/366).

[88] Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa-l-Mutakallim, p. 134.

knowledge. Such things are like highway robbers, barring the seeker from his *Maqsad* (objective). For this reason, the early generations deemed it praiseworthy to distance oneself from family and homeland, for when the mind is divided, it falls short of grasping realities and perceiving subtle intricacies. Has not Allah said that He has not placed for any man two hearts within his chest?

Likewise it is said:

الْعِلْمُ لَا يُعْطِيكَ بَعْضَهُ حَتَّى تُعْطِيَهُ كُلَّكَ

Knowledge will not give you part of itself until you give it all of yourself.[89]

It is also reported of Imam al-Shāfiʿī that he said:

لَوْ كُلِّفْتُ شِرَاءَ بَصَلَةٍ لَمَا فَهِمْتُ مَسْأَلَةً

"If I were tasked with buying an onion, I would not understand an issue."[90]

Time Management

The third etiquette is that the seeker should divide the hours of his night and day and make the most of what remains of his life, for the remainder of life

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[89] Mizan ul Amal Li Ghazali P. 344

[90] Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa-l-Mutakallim, p. 80-81

In this statement, Imām al-Shāfiʿī is emphasizing that had he occupied himself with trivial worldly tasks—such as shopping for groceries and haggling over minor prices—his mind would have been diverted from higher and more significant matters. Such distractions, though small, would have hindered his ability to focus on knowledge and deeper understanding.

Thus, one should strive to free oneself from petty preoccupations so that the mind remains clear, present, and fully available for matters that truly warrant reflection and profound thought.

is of inestimable value.

The best times for memorization are the pre-dawn hours; for research, the early morning; for writing, the middle of the day; and for reading and review, the night.

Imam Al-Khaṭīb said:

أَجْوَدُ أَوْقَاتِ الْحِفْظِ الْأَسْحَارُ، ثُمَّ وَسَطُ النَّهَارِ، ثُمَّ الْغَدَاةُ

"The best times for memorization are the pre-dawn hours, then the middle of the day, then the early morning."

He also said:

وَحِفْظُ اللَّيْلِ أَنْفَعُ مِنْ حِفْظِ النَّهَارِ، وَوَقْتُ الْجُوعِ أَنْفَعُ مِنْ وَقْتِ الشِّبَعِ

"Memorization at night is more beneficial than memorization during the day, and the time of hunger is more beneficial than the time of satiety."[91]

Sleep Management

The fourth etiquette is that the seeker should reduce his sleep, so long as it does not harm his body or mind, and that he not exceed eight hours of sleep in a day and night—one third of the time. If his condition allows him less than that, then he should do so.

There is no harm in his giving rest to his body, heart, mind, and eyesight when any of these become fatigued or weakened—by taking wholesome recreation and lawful outings—provided that he then returns to his former

[91] Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa-l-Mutakallim, p. 83-84

state and does not squander his time.[92]

Be in the Right Company

The fifth etiquette is that the seeker should avoid the company of those who are given to excessive play and little reflection, for dispositions are indeed contagious. The harm of such companionship lies in the quiet wasting of one's life, as time slips away without benefit or gain. What is fitting for the student of knowledge is that he associate only with one from whom he benefits or who benefits from him.

If he must have a companion, then let him be a righteous companion—religious, God-fearing, scrupulous, intelligent, abundant in good, scant in evil, gentle in conduct, little given to disputation: if he forgets, he reminds him; if he remembers, he assists him; if he is in need, he comforts him; and if he becomes weary, he encourages him.[93]

Scrupulousness and Lawful Living (Waraʿ)

The sixth etiquette is that the seeker accustom himself to scrupulousness (*waraʿ*) in all of his affairs, and that he seek what is lawful in his food, drink, clothing, dwelling, and in all that he and his dependents require—so that his heart may be illuminated and become fit to receive knowledge, its light, and its benefit. He should be content with whatever provision is made easy for him, even if little, and with clothing, when worn, merely covers what is required.

For by enduring the hardship of a constrained livelihood, one attains the expansiveness of knowledge; and by doing so, the scattered concerns of the

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[92] Ibid. P. 88

[93] *Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa-l-Mutakallim*, pp. 83-84

heart are gathered from the crossroads of competing desires, and the springs of wisdom burst forth within it.[94]

Topic Four: Obstacles to Bearing Knowledge

Not all people are suited to bear knowledge. There are those who are unfit to carry it. ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him) mentioned categories among the bearers of knowledge who are not suitable to carry it, and he identified four types:

The ones who trade the Hereafter for the life of this world:

The first one who is not trustworthy with it is the one who has been granted intelligence and a strong memory, yet has not been granted purity. He takes the knowledge—which is an instrument of the religion—and turns it into an instrument for worldly gain, using it to acquire worldly benefits and to reach them through knowledge. He turns the commodity that is meant to be the commerce of the Hereafter into the commerce of this world.

Such a person is not trustworthy with what he carries of knowledge, and Allah will never make him an imam in it. For the truly trustworthy one is he who has no ulterior motive and no self-directed desire except following the truth and conforming to it.

This category—those who have turned the commodity and trade of the Hereafter into a trade of the world—have betrayed Allah, betrayed His servants, and betrayed His religion. For this reason, they are not to be trusted with knowledge, nor are they counted among its true bearers.

Those Who Prefer Comfort Over Knowledge

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[94] Ibid., pp. 71, 75

The second category is a man whose aspiration is fixed upon attaining pleasure; he is driven wherever desire calls him. Such a person does not attain the rank of inheriting prophethood. Knowledge is not attained except by abandoning pleasures and divorcing comfort.

Imam Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr[95] said:

لَا يُنَالُ الْعِلْمُ بِرَاحَةِ الْجِسْمِ

"Knowledge is not attained with bodily comfort."[96]

And Imam Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī[97] said:

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[95] Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr (d. 129 AH / 747 CE) was a distinguished tābiʿī and scholar of ḥadīth and fiqh from Baṣrah, later residing in al-Yamāmah. His full name was Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr al-Yamāmī, and he was known for his dedication to seeking knowledge, precision in narration, and strong adherence to the Sunnah. He studied under Anas ibn Mālik (may Allah be pleased with him) and other prominent scholars of his time, and many later scholars narrated from him. He is also well known for his insightful statements on knowledge.

[96] Narrated in Saheeh Muslim 612 (Book of Mosques, chapter on the times of the five daily prayers) with the wording:

لا يستطاع العلم براحة الجسم

"Knowledge cannot be attained through bodily comfort."

The following statement mentioned by Imam Ibn Al-Jawzi in his counsels titled Yaqutah (P. 57) also beautifully explains this point too:

واعلم أن الراحة لا تنال بالراحة، ومعالي الأمور لا تنال بالفتور، ومن زرع حصد، ومن جد وجد.

And know that comfort is not attained through comfort, and lofty matters are not attained through laxity. Whoever sows, reaps; and whoever strives, finds.

[97] Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285 AH / 898 CE), whose full name was Ibrāhīm ibn Isḥāq al-Ḥarbī, was a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth, fiqh, and asceticism from Baghdad. He was a student of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and was deeply influenced by his methodology and adherence to the Sunnah.

أَجْمَعَ عُقَلَاءُ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَنَّ النَّعِيمَ لَا يُدْرَكُ بِالنَّعِيمِ، وَمَنْ آثَرَ الرَّاحَةَ فَاتَتْهُ الرَّاحَةُ، فَمَا لِصَاحِبِ اللَّذَّاتِ وَمَا لِدَرَجَةِ وَرَاثَةِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

"The intelligent of every nation have unanimously agreed that bliss is not attained through indulgence, and that whoever prefers comfort will miss comfort altogether. What has the seeker of pleasures to do with the rank of inheriting the Prophets?"[98]

[As expressed in poetry,]

فَدَعْ عَنْكَ الْكِتَابَةَ لَسْتَ مِنْهَا... وَلَوْ سَوَّدْتَ وَجْهَكَ بِالْمِدَادِ

So leave off writing – you are not of its people,
Even if you blacken your face with ink.[99]

for knowledge is the craft of the heart and its occupation. Whoever does not free himself for its craft and occupation will not attain it. The heart has only one direction; if you direct it toward pleasures and desires, it turns away from knowledge.

Whoever does not give precedence to the pleasure of grasping knowledge over the pleasure of his body and the desire of his soul will never attain the rank of knowledge.

Known for his vast knowledge, strong memory, and piety, he was regarded as an authority in both ḥadīth and jurisprudence, as well as for his understanding of language and literature. He authored several works and was widely praised by the scholars for his humility, devotion, and dedication to knowledge, and his statements are often cited in works on scholarship and spiritual refinement.

[98] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/142).

[99] Ibid. 1/142

Comment from the editor:

In relation to the above, it is pertinent to understand the point below that Maualana Maududi highlighted in the foreword of Tafheem ul Quran:

"Despite all the devices and approaches mentioned above, one cannot grasp the inspiring spirit of the Quran unless one begins to put its message into practice, for the Quran is neither a book of abstract ideas and theories which may be studied in an easy chair nor is it a book of religious enigmas which could only be unraveled in monasteries and universities. It is a Book that has been sent down to invite people to start a movement and to lead its followers and direct their activities towards the achievement of its mission. Therefore, one has to go to the battlefield of life to understand the real meaning of the Quran. That was why a quiet and amiable person like our Master Muhammad ﷺ (Allah's peace be upon him) had to come out of his seclusion and start an Islamic Movement and fight against the rebellious world. It was the Quran that urged him to declare war against every kind of falsehood and engage in conflict with the leaders of disbelief without any consideration of the consequences. Then this movement attracted good souls from every home and gathered them under the banner of its leader in order to fight against the upholders of the old order who organized themselves into a gang to oppose them. During this long and bitter struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, which continued for almost twenty-three years, the Quran went on guiding the Movement in every phase and at every stage, until it succeeded in establishing the Islamic way of life in its perfection. It is thus obvious that one cannot possibly adequately grasp the truth

contained in the Quran by mere recitation of its words. For this purpose, one must play an active part in the conflict between belief and unbelief, between Islam and un-Islam, and between truth and falsehood. One can understand it only if one takes up its message, invites the world to accept it, and moves on and on following its guidance. Thus alone will one experience, re-live, and understand all that which happened during the revelation of the Quran. One will meet with the same conditions that were experienced at Makkah, Ta'if, and Habash and pass through the same kind of fire that had to be passed through at Badr, Uhd, Hunain, Tabuk, and other battlefields from where the men of Muhammad ﷺ passed through. In this struggle, one will face Abu Jahls and Abu Lahabs of his era and come across hypocrites, the double-faced, the Jews, and every type of people mentioned in the Quran. Incidentally, this is a wonderful experience of its own kind and worth the trial.

While passing through any one of these stages of this experience, one will find some ayaat and some Surahs of the Quran, which will themselves tell that they were revealed at such and such a stage and brought such and such instructions for the guidance of the Movement. In this way, the Quran will lay bare its spirit even though one might not be able to understand all the lexical meanings of its words and solve all the intricacies of grammar and rhetoric. The same formula applies to its commandments, its moral teachings, its instructions about economics and culture, and its laws regarding different aspects of human life. These things can never be understood unless they are put into practice. It is, thus, obvious that those individuals and communities who discard it from practical life, cannot understand its meaning and live its spirit by mere lip service to it."

Those Who Follow Without Firm Understanding

The third category is the compliant follower—one whose chest has not been expanded by knowledge, nor has his heart found tranquility in it. Rather, he is weak in insight regarding it, yet he follows its people. This is the condition of the followers of the truth among their imitators. Though they are upon a path of salvation, they are not among the *du'aat* (callers) to the religion; rather, they are from those who merely increase the numbers of the army, not from its commanders or its knights.

Those Who Are Consumed by the Pursuit of Wealth

The fourth category is one whose eagerness and aspiration are devoted to accumulating wealth, increasing it, and storing it. His pleasure lies in that, and he is consumed by it to the exclusion of all else. He sees nothing more delightful than what he is engaged in—so how can such a person attain the rank of knowledge?

Topic Conclusion:

These four categories are neither callers to the religion, nor leaders in knowledge, nor sincere seekers of it.

If any of them attach themselves to some portion of knowledge, they are merely climbers upon it—imitators of its bearers and people, claimants to a connection with it, yet severed from its ropes.

The trial posed by such people is a trial for every one who is prone to fitnah, for people imitate them due to what they assume they possess of knowledge, saying: "We are no better than them, nor do we see ourselves as above them." Thus, they become a proof for every deluded person.

Comment from the editor:

This statement highlights the nature of fitnah (trial and misguidance) caused by such individuals. Their danger lies not merely in their own deviation, but in the effect, they have on others. Because they are outwardly associated with knowledge, people are deceived into trusting them and imitating their actions, assuming they must be upon correctness. This imitation then becomes a source of fitnah, as others justify their own shortcomings and errors by pointing to them, saying: "We are no better than them." In this way, these individuals become a means through which misguidance spreads, serving as a false proof for those already inclined toward deviation, thereby increasing confusion and weakening adherence to the truth.

For this reason, some of the noble Companions said:

احْذَرُوا فِتْنَةَ الْعَالِمِ الْفَاجِرِ وَالْعَابِدِ الْجَاهِلِ، فَإِنَّ فِتْنَتَهُمَا فِتْنَةٌ لِكُلِّ مَفْتُونٍ

"Beware of the trial of the immoral scholar (i.e. the trial that others face because of them) and the ignorant worshipper, for indeed their trial is a trial for everyone who is tried."[100]

Some of The Actionable Points from Section 1:

- Strive to combine both understanding and sincerity, recognizing that knowledge is not attained by intellect alone, but by a sound heart and upright intention.
- Purify your intention regularly, ensuring that your pursuit of knowledge is solely for the sake of Allah and not for status, argumentation, or recognition.

[100] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/139-143)

- Develop the habit of asking beneficial questions, as this aids understanding and deepens comprehension.
- Train yourself to listen attentively during lessons, avoiding distractions and giving full focus to what is being taught.
- Work on strengthening your understanding before moving on, ensuring that what you learn is properly grasped.
- Commit portions of knowledge to memory, especially foundational texts and evidences, as memorization preserves knowledge.
- Act upon what you learn as soon as possible, even if it is small, so that knowledge becomes a means of guidance rather than a burden.
- Gradually begin to share and teach what you have learned, with care and responsibility, as knowledge is perfected through conveying it.
- Manage your time wisely, allocating specific periods for study, revision, and rest, and avoiding procrastination.
- Maintain a balanced routine, including proper sleep and consistency, so that your body supports your pursuit of knowledge.
- Keep the company of righteous and serious students of knowledge, as companionship has a strong effect on one's progress.
- Be mindful of your livelihood and actions, striving for what is lawful and avoiding what may corrupt the heart.
- Guard yourself against distractions of the worldly life that may divert you from seeking knowledge.
- Avoid seeking comfort and ease at the expense of effort,

recognizing that knowledge requires patience and striving.

- Beware of blindly following without understanding, and strive to build a sound and grounded comprehension of what you learn.
- Regularly reflect on your progress, identifying weaknesses in your approach and taking steps to correct them.

Section Three: The Responsibility of Conveying Knowledge

Summary of Section 3:

This section addresses the second great responsibility of the student of knowledge: conveying what has been learned, both through one's actions and through teaching others. The author emphasizes that knowledge reaches its completion only when it is manifested in righteous conduct, for actions are the true proof of sincerity and understanding. Thus, the student must embody the knowledge he carries, lest it become a proof against him rather than in his favor. In addition to this, the section highlights the duty of teaching and transmitting knowledge to others with clarity, wisdom, and trustworthiness, ensuring that it is conveyed accurately and sincerely. It becomes evident that conveying knowledge is not merely a privilege, but a weighty responsibility that requires adherence to the truth, carefulness in speech, and a constant awareness of accountability before Allah. In this way, the student of knowledge fulfills the trust placed upon him—by living the knowledge he has acquired and by guiding others to it.

Topic One: The Responsibility of Conveying It Through Action

The responsibility borne by the student of knowledge toward knowledge has two aspects:

- **The first:** the responsibility of conveying it through action.
- **The second:** the responsibility of conveying it through teaching.

As for the responsibility of conveying it through action, Ibn Masʿūd (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا لَا يَعْمَلُ بِهِ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ الْعِلْمُ إِلَّا كِبْرًا

"Whoever learns knowledge and does not act upon it, knowledge only increases him in arrogance."[101]

And he (may Allah be pleased with him) also said:

تَعَلَّمُوا، تَعَلَّمُوا، فَإِذَا عَلِمْتُمْ فَاعْمَلُوا

"Learn, then learn; and when you have learned, then act."[102]

Imam Al-Ḥasan Basri said:

الْعَالِمُ الَّذِي وَافَقَ عِلْمُهُ عَمَلَهُ

"The scholar is the one whose actions conform to his knowledge."[103]

And it is also reported from him that he said:

عُقُوبَةُ الْعَالِمِ مَوْتُ قَلْبِهِ. قِيلَ لَهُ: وَمَا مَوْتُ الْقَلْبِ؟ قَالَ: طَلَبُ الدُّنْيَا بِعَمَلِ الْآخِرَةِ

"The punishment of the scholar is the death of his heart." It was said to him: What

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[101] Al Targhīb wa l Tarhīb by Abū al Qāsim al Aṣbahānī (2/875).

[102] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 1266 (1/705); Sunan al Dārimī (1/103), Al-Iqtida Li Al-Khaṭīb Al-Baghdadi p10

[103] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 1241 (1/698)

is the death of the heart?" He replied: "Seeking the world through the deeds of the Hereafter."[104]

Imam Hilāl ibn al-ʿAlā'[105] said:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ شَدِيدٌ، وَحِفْظُهُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ طَلَبِهِ، وَالْعَمَلُ بِهِ أَشَدُّ مِنْ حِفْظِهِ، وَالسَّلَامَةُ مِنْهُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ بِهِ

"Seeking knowledge is difficult, preserving it is more difficult than seeking it, acting upon it is more difficult than preserving it, and being safe from it is more difficult than acting upon it."

Then he recited:

يموتُ قومٌ ويُحيي العِلْمُ ذِكْرَهُمُ ... والجَهْلُ يُلْحِقُ أَمْوَاتاً بِأَمْوَاتِ

A people may die, yet knowledge keeps their memory alive;
while ignorance joins the living to the ranks of the dead.[106]

And Imam al-Shāfiʿī said:

لَيْسَ الْعِلْمُ مَا حُفِظَ، الْعِلْمُ مَا نَفَعَ

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[104] Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 1156 (1/667)

[105] Hilāl ibn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Bāhilī al-Raqqī (d. 280 AH / 893 CE), Abū ʿAmr, was a scholar of ḥadīth from al-Raqqah. He was the son of the scholar al-ʿAlāʾ ibn Hilāl and studied under a number of prominent teachers, including Ḥajjāj ibn Muḥammad and ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī (may Allah be pleased with them). Among those who narrated from him were al-Nasāʾī and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (may Allah be pleased with them). In addition to his involvement in ḥadīth, he was known for his literary refinement and poetry, reflecting a combination of scholarship and adab characteristic of the scholars of his region.

[106] Al Targhīb wa l Tarhīb by Abū al Qāsim al Aṣbahānī (2/874).

"Knowledge is not what is memorized; knowledge is what benefits."[107]

Topic Two: The Responsibility of Conveying Knowledge through Teaching

As for the responsibility of conveying knowledge through teaching, Imam ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak said:

مَنْ بَخِلَ بِالْعِلْمِ ابْتُلِيَ بِثَلَاثٍ:

إِمَّا بِمَوْتٍ يُذْهِبُ عِلْمَهُ، وَإِمَّا يُنْسَى، وَإِمَّا يَلْزَمُ السُّلْطَانَ فَيَذْهَبُ عِلْمُهُ سُلْطَانًا

"Whoever is miserly with knowledge will be tested by one of three things: either death will overtake him and take his knowledge away; or he will forget it; or he will attach himself to authority, and his knowledge will be lost to authority."[108]

It is also reported from Imam Abū Qilābah[109] that he said:

الْعُلَمَاءُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: رَجُلٌ عَاشَ بِعِلْمِهِ، وَلَمْ يَعِشِ النَّاسُ بِهِ مَعَهُ، وَرَجُلٌ عَاشَ النَّاسُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمْ يَعِشْ هُوَ بِهِ،

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[107] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ wa l Mutakallim, p. 15.

[108] Siyar Aʿlām al Nubalāʾ (8/398).

[109] Abū Qilābah al-Jarmī, whose name was ʿAbd Allāh ibn Zayd al-Baṣrī (d. 104 AH), was a distinguished Tābiʿī, ḥadīth scholar, and jurist renowned for his deep understanding and piety. Born in Baṣrah, he later settled in al-Shām, where he became a leading authority in knowledge and legal judgment, and was counted among the foremost scholars of his time. He narrated from noble Companions such as Anas ibn Mālik (may Allah be pleased with them all), and eminent scholars like Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī transmitted from him. Known for his waraʿ and humility, he refused judicial office and even fled to avoid it, out of fear of its responsibility. Toward the end of his life, he was severely afflicted in his body, yet his tongue remained constantly engaged in the remembrance and praise of Allah. His devotion, patience in trials, and steadfast commitment to knowledge made him a model of the righteous scholars among the Tābiʿīn.

وَرَجُلٌ عَاشَ بِعِلْمِهِ وَعَاشَ النَّاسُ بِهِ مَعَهُ

"Scholars are of three types: a man who lives by his knowledge, yet people do not live by it with him; a man by whose knowledge people live, yet he himself does not live by it; and a man who lives by his knowledge and people live by it with him."[110]

Some of the early scholars said:

صِنْفَانِ، إِذَا صَلَحَا صَلَحَ سَائِرُ النَّاسِ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَا فَسَدَ سَائِرُ النَّاسِ: الْعُلَمَاءُ وَالْأُمَرَاءُ

"There are two groups: if they are sound, all people are sound; and if they are corrupt, all people are corrupt – the scholars and the rulers."[111]

Imam ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mubārak said:

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[110] Musannaf ʿAbd al Razzāq (11/254), Al Ḥilyatul Awlia (2/283), Jāmiʿ Bayān al ʿIlm wa Faḍlih 1546 (1/823)

This statement divides scholars into three types based on how knowledge benefits them and others:

- "**A man who lived by his knowledge, but people did not live by it with him**" - This refers to a scholar who acts upon his knowledge sincerely, benefiting himself spiritually, but his knowledge does not spread or influence others much—either because he does not teach, or people do not take from him.
- "**A man by whose knowledge people lived, but he himself did not live by it**" - This is the one who teaches and benefits others, yet fails to act upon his own knowledge. People gain guidance through him, but he himself is deprived because he does not implement what he knows.
- "**A man who lived by his knowledge and people lived by it with him**" - This is the complete and praiseworthy type: he acts upon his knowledge and teaches it, so both he and others benefit. He combines sincerity, practice, and transmission—this is the model of the true scholar.

[111] This statement can be found in Ihya Uloom Ad-Din 1/6, and some other books. Its attribution to the Prophet ﷺ is unproven and hence it is considered a statement of some of the scholars.

وَهَلْ أَفْسَدَ الدِّينَ إِلَّا الْمُلُوكُ وَأَحْبَارُ سُوءٍ وَرُهْبَانُهَا

And what has corrupted the religion except kings, And evil scholars, and its monks?[112]

Imam Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl[113] said:

ذَهَابُ الإِسْلَامِ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْ أَرْبَعَةِ أَصْنَافٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ:

١ صِنْفٌ لَا يَعْمَلُونَ بِمَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

٢ وَصِنْفٌ يَعْمَلُونَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

٣ وَصِنْفٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ وَلَا يَعْمَلُونَ.

٤ وَصِنْفٌ يَمْنَعُونَ النَّاسَ مِنَ العِلْمِ.

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[112] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/105).

[113] Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhī (d. 317 AH), Abū ʿAbd Allāh, was a prominent imām, ascetic, and preacher from Balkh, later residing in Samarqand, where he became a leading figure in exhortation and spiritual guidance. Counted among the foremost scholars of Khurāsān, he was known for his deep insight, powerful admonitions, and firm adherence to the way of the people of ḥadīth. He studied under notable teachers such as Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh and narrated ḥadīth, being among the last to transmit from Qutaybah ibn Saʿīd. Revered by scholars like Abū ʿUthmān al-Ḥīrī, who longed for his company, he was widely recognized for his profound impact on hearts—so much so that it is reported people were deeply moved, even to death, during his sermons. Though opposed and expelled from Balkh due to his theological stance, he was honored in Samarqand, where he spent his later years. His sayings on knowledge, sincerity, and spiritual discipline—such as his warning about the decline of religion through the corruption of knowledge—reflect his penetrating understanding and enduring legacy among the early scholars of asceticism and admonition.

"The disappearance of Islam will occur at the hands of four categories of people:

1. *A group who do not act upon what they know.*
2. *A group who act upon what they do not know.*
3. *A group who neither know nor act.*
4. *A group who prevent people from acquiring knowledge."*[114]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said:

الصِّنْفُ الأَوَّلُ: مَنْ لَهُ عِلْمٌ بِلَا عَمَلٍ، فَهُوَ أَضَرُّ شَيْءٍ عَلَى العَامَّةِ؛ فَإِنَّهُ حُجَّةٌ لَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ نَقِيصَةٍ وَمَنْقَصَةٍ.

The first category – those who possess knowledge without action – are the most harmful of all to the general public, for they become a proof for people in every shortcoming and deviation.

وَالصِّنْفُ الثَّانِي: العَابِدُ الجَاهِلُ،

فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ يُحْسِنُونَ الظَّنَّ بِهِ لِعِبَادَتِهِ وَصَلَاحِهِ، فَيَقْتَدُونَ بِهِ عَلَىٰ جَهْلِهِ.

The second category is the ignorant worshipper. People think well of him due to his worship and apparent righteousness, and thus they follow him despite his ignorance.

These two categories are the ones referred to by some of the early scholars in their statement:

احْذَرُوا فِتْنَةَ العَالِمِ الفَاجِرِ، وَالعَابِدِ الجَاهِلِ، فَإِنَّ فِتْنَتَهُمَا فِتْنَةٌ لِكُلِّ مَفْتُونٍ.

'Beware of the trial of the immoral scholar and the ignorant worshipper, for indeed

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[114] Ibid. (1/160).

their trial is a trial for everyone who is tried.'[115]

for people follow their scholars and their worshippers. If the scholars are immoral and the worshippers are ignorant, the calamity becomes widespread and the trial immense—afflicting both the elite and the common people.

وَالصِّنْفُ الثَّالِثُ: مَنْ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُمْ وَلَا عَمَلَ، وَإِنَّمَا هُمْ كَالْأَنْعَامِ السَّائِمَةِ.

The third category consists of those who possess neither knowledge nor action; they are nothing but like grazing livestock."

وَالصِّنْفُ الرَّابِعُ: نُوَّابُ إِبْلِيسَ فِي الأَرْضِ، وَهُمُ الَّذِينَ يُثَبِّطُونَ النَّاسَ عَنْ طَلَبِ العِلْمِ وَالتَّفَقُّهِ فِي الدِّينِ، فَهَؤُلَاءِ أَضَرُّ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيَاطِينِ الجِنِّ، فَإِنَّهُمْ يَحُولُونَ بَيْنَ القُلُوبِ وَبَيْنَ هُدَى اللَّهِ وَطَرِيقِهِ.

The fourth category consists of the deputies of Iblīs on earth – those who discourage people from seeking knowledge and from gaining understanding of the religion. Such people are more harmful to others than the devils from among the jinn, for they erect barriers between hearts and the guidance of Allah and His path.[116]

Some of The Actionable Points from Section 3:

- Make your primary focus to act upon your knowledge, ensuring that your conduct reflects what you have learned.
- Regularly examine yourself, asking whether your actions align with your knowledge, and seek to correct any shortcomings.
- Avoid speaking or teaching about matters that you have not

[115] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/139-143)

[116] Miftāḥ Dār al Saʿādah (1/160)

properly understood or verified.

- Convey knowledge with sincerity, intending to benefit others and guide them, not to seek recognition or praise.
- Be truthful and precise when teaching, avoiding exaggeration, distortion, or speaking beyond your level.
- Adopt wisdom and good manners in conveying knowledge, choosing appropriate times, words, and methods when addressing others.
- Begin with what is most important and beneficial when teaching, prioritising foundational matters.
- Be patient with those you teach, recognising that guidance takes time and effort.
- Lead by example, understanding that your actions will often have a greater impact than your words.
- Take responsibility for the knowledge you share, being mindful that you will be accountable for how it is conveyed.
- Encourage others toward beneficial knowledge, while also directing them to reliable sources and scholars.
- Avoid using knowledge as a means of argumentation, debate, or gaining superiority over others.
- Continually renew your intention in both acting upon and conveying knowledge, seeking Allah's acceptance in all that you do.
- Remember the weight of this trust, and strive to fulfill it with honesty, humility, and consistency.

Conclusion

The Special Status of Righteous Scholars

Imam Al-Shaʿbī[117] said:

كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ عُلَمَاؤُهَا شِرَارُهَا إِلَّا الْمُسْلِمِينَ، فَإِنَّ عُلَمَاءَهُمْ خِيَارُهُمْ.

"The scholars of every nation are its worst – except the Muslims, for their scholars are their best."[118]

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah said:

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[117] ʿĀmir ibn Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī (d. 103 AH), Abū ʿAmr, was one of the most distinguished Tābiʿūn and a leading imām of Kūfah in ḥadīth and fiqh. Born during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him), he grew up among the noble companions and is reported to have met and narrated from a large number of them—some reports mention over five hundred. He was renowned for his extraordinary memory, sharp intelligence, and vast knowledge, to the extent that he famously said he never wrote anything down, yet never forgot what he heard. Al-Shaʿbī was a master of transmitted knowledge (āthār), and many prominent scholars—such as Abū Ḥanīfah, Qatādah, and al-Aʿmash (may Allah be pleased with them all)—narrated from him. Despite his immense knowledge, he was known for his humility and caution in issuing verdicts, frequently saying "I do not know," which scholars considered a sign of his depth. He also served at times in official roles, including as a judge under ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (may Allah be pleased with him), and was even sent on diplomatic missions. His life reflected both scholarship and worldly experience, yet he remained grounded in knowledge and waraʿ. Widely praised by later scholars, he was described as the most knowledgeable of people in his time, combining fiqh, ḥadīth, and insight, and thus stands as one of the great authorities among the early generations.

[118] Ibid.

أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ فِي الإِسْلَامِ، كَأَهْلِ الإِسْلَامِ فِي المِلَلِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ غَيْرَ المُسْلِمِينَ فَهُمْ ضُلَّالٌ، وَإِنَّمَا يُضِلُّهُمْ عُلَمَاؤُهُمْ، فَعُلَمَاؤُهُمْ شِرَارُهُمْ، وَالمُسْلِمُونَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى، وَإِنَّمَا يَتَبَيَّنُ الهُدَىٰ بِعُلَمَائِهِمْ، فَعُلَمَاؤُهُمْ خِيَارُهُمْ. وَكَذَلِكَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ أَئِمَّتُهُمْ خِيَارُ الأُمَّةِ، وَأَئِمَّةُ أَهْلِ البِدَعِ أَضَرُّ عَلَى الأُمَّةِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الذُّنُوبِ.

Ahl al-Sunnah, within Islam, are like the Muslims in relation to the other religions. For every nation other than the Muslims is astray, and it is their scholars who mislead them; thus, their scholars are their worst. As for the Muslims, they are upon guidance, and guidance becomes manifest through their scholars; therefore, their scholars are their best. Likewise, the people of the Sunnah – their leaders are the best of the ummah, whereas the leaders of innovation are more harmful to the ummah than the people of sins."

Shaykh Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿah said:

وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ جَمِيعَ مَا ذُكِرَ مِنْ فَضِيلَةِ العِلْمِ وَالعُلَمَاءِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ فِي حَقِّ العُلَمَاءِ العَامِلِينَ الأَبْرَارِ المُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ قَصَدُوا بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ الكَرِيمِ، وَالزُّلْفَىٰ لَدَيْهِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ، لَا مَنْ طَلَبَهُ بِسُوءِ نِيَّةٍ أَوْ خُبْثِ طَوِيَّةٍ، أَوْ لِأَغْرَاضٍ دُنْيَوِيَّةٍ مِنْ جَاهٍ أَوْ مَالٍ أَوْ مُكَاثَرَةٍ فِي الأَتْبَاعِ وَالطُّلَّابِ.

"Know that all that has been mentioned regarding the virtue of knowledge and scholars applies only to the righteous, practicing, God-fearing scholars who sought knowledge for the noble Face of Allah and for nearness to Him in the Gardens of bliss – not to those who sought it with corrupt intention, a tainted inner disposition, or for worldly aims such as status, wealth, or increasing followers and students."[119]

Know Your Responsibilities, O Seekers of Ilm

[119] Tadhkirat al Sāmiʿ wa l Mutakallim, p. 13

From these citations, it becomes clear to you—O student of knowledge—the magnitude of the responsibility placed upon your shoulders. You bear three responsibilities:

- **The first responsibility:** responsibility for yourself.
- **The second responsibility:** responsibility for this religion which you have carried and of which you have become a trustee.
- **The third responsibility:** responsibility for this ummah, among whose obligations upon you is to teach it, guide it, and not withhold from it direction and sincere counsel.

It is not hidden from the student of knowledge that the state of misguidance and deviation in which many people find themselves today is due to their distance from the law of their Lord. It is well known that the rectification of people's conditions is contingent upon their return to their religion and their adherence to the law of their Lord.

This is an established truth, beyond dispute or argument. Students of knowledge are the standard-bearers of the Sharīʿah and the trustees of the inheritance of prophethood. With them lies the diagnosis of people's ailments and their cure. If they were to fulfill their duty as it truly deserves, then—by Allah's permission—the condition of people would change, their affairs would be set aright, and Allah would rectify their circumstances.

Indeed, it is astonishing to see the people of falsehood energetic in their falsehood, expending for it all that is precious and dear, sacrificing themselves and devising means in its service – whether it be a distorted religion, a corrupt ideology, or forbidden amusement – while you see some of the people of truth and students of authentic Islamic knowledge not expending of their time and effort what those

people expend, despite what they possess of truth, virtue, and reward, and despite what the others bear of sin, disgrace, and manifest loss in this world and the Hereafter.

More astonishing still is that a student of knowledge would incline toward the world, its perishable debris and fleeting adornment, and not strive to acquire knowledge—which is the path to the everlasting Garden of eternity. It is therefore not fitting for students of knowledge to incline toward ease and comfort, nor to busy themselves with the pleasures of life and the means of comfort and luxury that have become widespread in our present age.

Let the student of knowledge know that if he neglects the acquisition of knowledge, wastes his days and nights, procrastinates during the hours of youth, and does not urge himself forward or bind it to the gatherings of study and learning, nor seize the times of leisure, strength, and vitality—then once these pass, they will never return. If he has thus fallen short in **the trust of bearing knowledge** and failed to acquire it, then it is even more fitting that he would fall short in **the responsibility of conveying it** and of transmitting the law of Allah. For one who lacks something cannot give it.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the student of knowledge to be deeply conscious of his responsibility and to fulfill his duty toward Islamic sacred knowledge—by

- learning it,
- acting upon it, and
- teaching it.

This is achieved by following the guidance of the Prophets and their method in conveying the message: through patience and forbearance; by responding to people's harm with kindness and gentleness; by drawing people to Allah

through the best of means; and by offering whatever counsel one is able to provide."

With this we conclude—and Allah knows best.

May Allah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and his Companions.

Appendix: Student Checklist

(Added by the Editor)

The Purpose of This Checklist:

This checklist has been prepared as a practical companion to the themes of this book. The purpose of the book is not merely to inform the student of knowledge about his responsibilities, but to help him *live them*. For this reason, the checklist translates the concepts discussed—such as the amānah of knowledge, sincerity, proper acquisition, and responsible conveyance—into clear, actionable points. Its objective is to serve as a tool for:

- muhāsabah (self-accounting) and
- intentional planning,

so that the student can continually measure himself against the standards of this path and identify areas of strength and deficiency.

What will you find in it?

The checklist is organized in a deliberate and progressive manner, beginning with the correction of intention and inward preparation, then moving to the proper methods of seeking knowledge, followed by discipline in time and lifestyle, awareness of obstacles, and finally the responsibilities of acting upon and conveying knowledge. In this way, it reflects the natural journey of the student: from inner formation, to acquisition, to preservation, to practice, and ultimately to service.

How to use it?

Students are encouraged to use this checklist regularly, not as a one-time reading, but as a recurring instrument of reflection. It may be reviewed weekly or at suitable intervals, with the student asking himself honestly which areas he has fulfilled and where he has fallen short. It can also be used as a planning tool: selecting specific points to focus on in the coming days or weeks. The benefit of this checklist lies not in merely reading through it, but in engaging with it sincerely—returning to it, refining oneself through it, and allowing it to shape one's journey in seeking knowledge so that it remains a path of sincerity, discipline, and lasting benefit.

The Checklist

Student of Knowledge Muhāsabah Checklist

1) Foundational vision: why am I on this path?

Use this first. If this is weak, everything after it becomes unstable.

- ☐ I remind myself that seeking sacred knowledge is an amānah, not a status project.
- ☐ I remember that Allah favored me with Islam, then favored me again by opening for me the path of knowledge.
- ☐ I consciously view knowledge as a path to Allah, guidance, elevation, awe of Him, and benefit for others.
- ☐ I keep before my eyes that the student has two duties: to gain sound understanding first, then to warn/teach/benefit others correctly.
- ☐ I ask Allah regularly: "Rabbi zidnī ʿilmā."

- ☐ I renew conviction that knowledge is superior to mere worldly rank, wealth, or reputation.

- ☐ I remember that beneficial knowledge continues after death, so I study with a long horizon, not a short one.

2) Inner preparation: heart, sincerity, and purification

This comes before methods, because the book makes clear that knowledge is not attained by intellect alone, but by intelligence plus purity.

- ☐ I examine my intention before study: is this for Allah, or for recognition, debate, influence, or being "known"?

- ☐ I renew my intention during the journey, not just at the beginning.

- ☐ I work on purifying my heart from riyaa', love of praise, and self-display.

- ☐ I try to remove both major corruptors mentioned by the book's framework: doubts that damage understanding, and desires that damage obedience.

- ☐ I ask: am I becoming a person who knows but does not act?

- ☐ I ask: am I becoming intellectually sharp but spiritually hollow?

- ☐ I cultivate humility, because knowledge is a divine gift, not proof of my superiority.

- ☐ I try to become the first category described in the book: one who combines sound understanding with inward rectitude.

3) Readiness and seriousness: am I fit to carry knowledge?

This is the transition from inner state to disciplined pursuit.

- ☐ I treat seeking knowledge as serious labor, not a hobby.
- ☐ I accept that knowledge cannot be attained through laziness, indulgence, or love of ease.
- ☐ I train my mind to be alert, questioning, and attentive.
- ☐ I train my soul to be patient, consistent, and willing to sacrifice comfort.
- ☐ I ask whether I am actually trying to become a learner on the path of salvation, rather than a passive follower.
- ☐ I avoid being from the "rabble" who sway with every voice and trend.
- ☐ I remind myself that outward affiliation with knowledge is not enough; trustworthiness is required.

4) Method of acquisition, step 1: asking beneficial questions

The book explicitly includes asking questions as an early stage of attainment.

- ☐ I ask questions to understand, not to impress.
- ☐ I ask about what I genuinely do not understand.
- ☐ I prepare questions from my reading and lessons.
- ☐ I ask concise, relevant, and respectful questions.
- ☐ I do not let embarrassment stop me from clarifying what I need.
- ☐ I prefer questions that unlock principles, not only isolated facts.

- ☐ I record unanswered questions and return to them later.

5) Method of acquisition, step 2: listening and attentiveness

Before understanding comes proper reception.

- ☐ I give full attention in lessons and do not divide my mind.
- ☐ I minimize distractions during study sessions.
- ☐ I listen with the intention of grasping, preserving, and acting.
- ☐ I do not rush ahead while missing what is being explained now.
- ☐ I try to capture main ideas, evidences, and distinctions while listening.
- ☐ I review lesson notes soon after a class so attentiveness turns into retention.

6) Method of acquisition, step 3: sound understanding

The book distinguishes understanding from mere hearing and imitation.

- ☐ I do not move on until I understand the lesson at a sound level.
- ☐ I try to understand meanings, relationships, categories, and principles.
- ☐ I identify what is foundational and what is secondary.
- ☐ I check whether I can explain the point simply in my own words.
- ☐ I beware of blind following without firm comprehension.
- ☐ I test my understanding through revision, discussion, and restatement.
- ☐ I ask whether my understanding is rooted enough to protect me from confusion.

7) Method of acquisition, step 4: memorization and preservation

The book explicitly includes memorization as part of carrying knowledge.

- ☐ I have a regular memorization habit, even if small.
- ☐ I prioritize foundational material, core evidences, and essential texts.
- ☐ I revise memorized material before it fades.
- ☐ I connect memorization to understanding, not empty repetition.
- ☐ I keep a system for review: daily, weekly, monthly.
- ☐ I preserve notes and organize them for retrieval later.

8) Method of acquisition, step 5: acting upon what I know

This is one of the book's strongest themes: knowledge without action becomes a proof against its possessor.

- ☐ I turn new knowledge into at least one concrete action quickly.
- ☐ I ask after every lesson: what changes in my worship, conduct, speech, or priorities?
- ☐ I do not allow my learning to remain theoretical only.
- ☐ I measure benefit not merely by what I collected, but by what I obeyed.
- ☐ I fear becoming a person whose knowledge argues against him.
- ☐ I use knowledge to reform my prayer, character, adab, and dealings.
- ☐ I view action as the completion and verification of understanding.

9) Method of acquisition, step 6: gradual conveying and teaching

The book places teaching after understanding, memorization, and action.

- ☐ I do not rush to teach before I have understood correctly.
- ☐ I share what I know with honesty and caution.
- ☐ I distinguish clearly between what I know, what I think, and what I do not know.
- ☐ I teach in proportion to my level and responsibility.
- ☐ I convey knowledge as I received it: without distortion, negligence, or betrayal.
- ☐ I choose the right audience, time, and manner for what I share.
- ☐ I intend benefit, not prominence.
- ☐ I remember that the right of knowledge includes both learning it and passing it on properly.

10) Daily discipline: time, scheduling, and anti-procrastination

The book explicitly treats procrastination, time management, and sleep management as adab of the student.

- ☐ I have fixed times for study, revision, memorization, and reading.
- ☐ I begin with the most important and most beneficial subjects.
- ☐ I protect my best mental hours for serious study.
- ☐ I do not postpone today's lesson to an undefined "later."

- ☐ I use small, repeatable blocks rather than relying on rare bursts of motivation.
- ☐ I leave space in my schedule for review, not only new intake.
- ☐ I track unfinished study tasks and clear them systematically.
- ☐ I avoid time leakage through aimless browsing, idle talk, and unplanned commitments.

11) Bodily support: sleep, stamina, and sustainable routine

This is not a side issue in the book; bodily comfort is not the path to knowledge, but bodily collapse is not the goal either.

- ☐ I manage sleep so that I can learn with alertness.
- ☐ I avoid both excess sleep and reckless sleep deprivation.
- ☐ I build a sustainable routine that supports consistency.
- ☐ I do not make comfort my master.
- ☐ I accept fatigue and effort as normal parts of seeking knowledge.
- ☐ I guard my body enough that it remains a servant to my study, not an obstacle to it.

12) Companionship and learning environment

The book explicitly includes keeping the right company.

- ☐ I keep company with serious, sincere, disciplined students.
- ☐ I sit in gatherings of knowledge regularly.

- ☐ I choose circles that increase reverence, clarity, and action.
- ☐ I distance myself from company that trivializes knowledge.
- ☐ I seek teachers and peers who help me correct myself.
- ☐ I use companionship for mutual reminder, not mutual distraction.
- ☐ I evaluate whether my environment makes me more focused or more heedless.

13) Waraʿ and lawful living

The book explicitly links lawful living and scrupulousness to the path of knowledge.

- ☐ I examine my income, food, and lifestyle for what may darken the heart.
- ☐ I try to reduce involvement in doubtful matters.
- ☐ I guard my tongue, gaze, and habits, since knowledge needs a clean vessel.
- ☐ I ask whether sin is quietly weakening my retention, sincerity, and benefit.
- ☐ I seek knowledge in a way compatible with taqwā, not alongside moral carelessness.

14) Guarding against the four major obstacles

The book's obstacle section is especially useful for self-audit.

A. Trading the Hereafter for the dunya

- ☐ I am not using knowledge as a ladder to image, influence, or worldly gain.
- ☐ I fear becoming outwardly "of knowledge" while inwardly betraying it.
- ☐ I ask whether people's regard matters to me more than Allah's acceptance.

B. Preferring comfort over knowledge

- ☐ I do not let ease, luxury, and convenience govern my study life.
- ☐ I accept that real attainment requires effort and sacrifice.
- ☐ I do not excuse negligence by calling it "balance" when it is really softness.

C. Following without firm understanding

- ☐ I am not content to repeat what I have not properly understood.
- ☐ I do not mistake being near knowledge for actually possessing it.
- ☐ I work to become grounded, not merely affiliated.

D. Being consumed by wealth

- ☐ I do not let earning, accumulating, and planning wealth swallow my aspiration.
- ☐ I check whether money concerns have displaced study from the center of my life.
- ☐ I ask: what am I really eager for? Knowledge or accumulation?

15) Responsibility of knowledge in conduct

Section Three stresses that knowledge must appear in action before speech carries weight.

- ☐ My manners are improving alongside my learning.
- ☐ My worship is becoming sounder and more careful.
- ☐ My speech is more truthful, restrained, and upright.
- ☐ My knowledge is making me softer before Allah, not harsher toward people.
- ☐ I do not call others to what I neglect myself.
- ☐ I remember that my life teaches even when my tongue is silent.
- ☐ I ask whether my conduct invites people to truth or pushes them away from it.

16) Responsibility of knowledge in teaching and benefit

Only after the previous stages does this become stable.

- ☐ I teach from responsibility, not impulse.
- ☐ I prepare before speaking.
- ☐ I transmit faithfully and avoid exaggeration.
- ☐ I keep the aim of warning, guiding, and benefiting people.
- ☐ I simplify without distorting.
- ☐ I mention evidence and trustworthy sources where appropriate.

- ☐ I avoid speaking beyond my capacity.
- ☐ I view teaching as an extension of service, not ownership.
- ☐ I want knowledge to remain beneficial after me.

Weekly muhāsabah questions

This final section turns the checklist into a recurring review tool.

- Did I renew my intention this week?
- Did I learn something with real understanding, not just exposure?
- Did I memorize and revise anything?
- Did I act on at least one piece of knowledge?
- Did I ask beneficial questions?
- Did I protect my study hours?
- Did I avoid procrastination and love of ease?
- Did I keep good company?
- Did I guard my heart from dunya-driven motives?
- Did my conduct reflect my learning?
- Did I benefit anyone correctly with what I learned?
- What was my biggest obstacle this week?
- What one change will I implement next week?

اللهم صل وسلم
على النبي محمد

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